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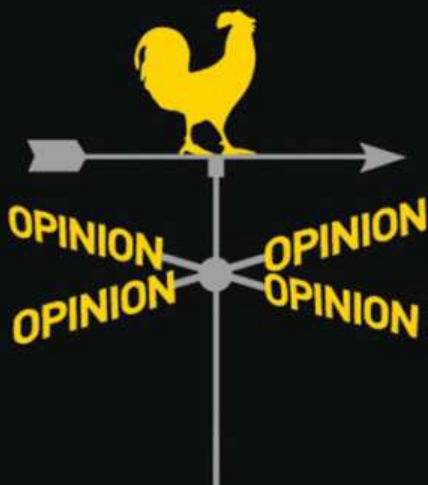
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OCTOBER

CONTENTS

Winning Health Over.....44

The bold and beautiful Tamil actor Gautami talks about what she learnt from getting breast cancer.

BY Sunalini Mathew

The Wonder Of Life.....95

Eight women used their experience with breast cancer to bolster the movement.

BY Kalyani Prasher

Cellulite Solutions That Actually Work.....106

New methods to fight puckered skin.

BY Jessica Chia

This Is Your Last Negative Thought.....112

The latest mindfulness training helps shut down self-defeatist thoughts.

BY Kate Rockwood

Shrink Your Sugar Belly!.....120

This gentle yoga and Pilates workout will help you control cravings and give your core shape and strength.

BY Lara Rosenbaum

Better Burgers.....126

Five burgers, reinvented to be nutrient-rich, low-calorie, yet flavourful and tasty.

BY Khalil Hymore

Breast cancer survivors share their tales.

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News

Health.....	23
Beauty.....	27
Nutrition.....	31
Fitness.....	41

Answers

Radhika Chandiramani	58
Rediscover femininity after a mastectomy.	
Dr Chandra M Gulhati	59
Safe alternatives for fighting lice in kids.	
Dr P Raghu Ram	60
The hype around mammography, and the myths and facts about this much-talked-of digital screening.	
Dr Issac Mathai	62
Natural ways to boost energy and immunity after breast-cancer treatment.	
Dr Rekha Sheth	63
OTC options for reducing scars.	
Aparna S Balasundaram	64
How to become your friend's emotional anchor after her breast cancer diagnosis.	
Dr Shelja Sen	66
Different ways a parent can help introverted kids.	
Neelanjana Singh	68
Here's all you wanted to know about the anti-cancer diet.	
Nisha Varma	70
How cycling can be a great workout option.	

In Every Issue

Readers' Letters.....	14
Ask Prevention.....	15
Inside Info.....	18
P.S. I Love You.....	138



On Our Cover: Gautami Tadimalla
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Look Young, Feel Young This Festive Season

When festivals come around, you need to look your best, at all times. The trendiest attire, young radiant skin with the perfect makeup that goes well with the rest seems imperative. And there is just so much to take care of—Clothes, shoes, accessories, hair, eyes, skin, lips... the list is endless. It is mayhem, minutes before the festivity starts! So why not start taking care of your skin with this routine and get a head start?



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Prevention

Volume 9 Number 7

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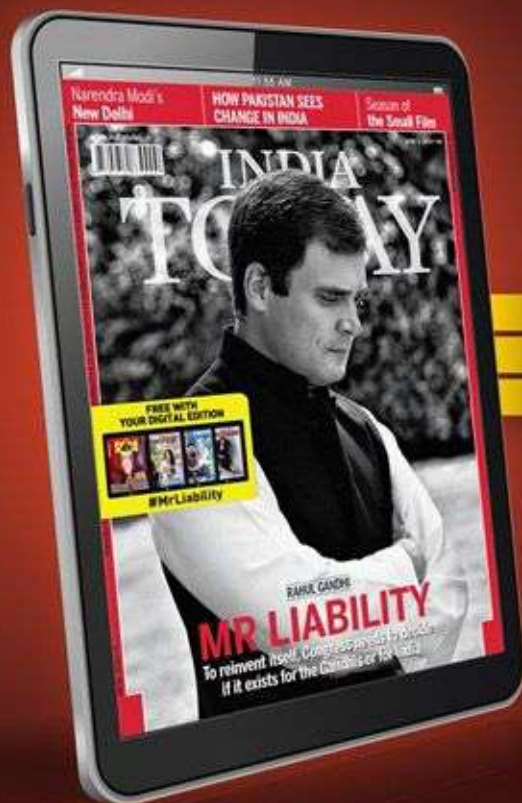
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Pink Is The Colour Of...

A couple of years ago, I took a year's break from work. I made a list of things to do: exercise two hours daily, get a check-up, read *Ulysses* – that sort of thing. I didn't read *Ulysses*, but I did exercise and I did get that check-up. During the gynaecological tests, I discovered that I had a breast cyst. Luckily, it was benign, but I do need to go in every year for a breast ultrasound.

The reason I am telling you this is because we, in India, don't speak about these things enough. "Breast" is almost a bad word, whispered in all-women gatherings, or preferably, not at all. Now this is scary, because Dr P Raghu Ram, a breast surgeon based in Hyderabad, recently wrote in to me with these numbers: "A woman succumbs to breast cancer every 10 minutes in India (there are 70,000 deaths each year), because more than 60% come in at the advanced stage." Most die within a year of being diagnosed. It's the most common cancer in women in India, with 1,50,000 being diagnosed each year.

Which is why, we celebrate the women who have had the disease and who have come out to tell their stories of influencing the community and helping the less fortunate through their fund-raising and knowledge-sharing activity – dare I say activism. Also, read the story of our inspiring cover girl, Gautami Tadimalla, Tamil-movie actor and long-time partner to actor Kamal Haasan. She talks of balancing mind and body and how a life-threatening disease like breast cancer, can actually change you for the better.

Women's Health Prevention
Running Challenge
FROM MINUTES TO MILES

COME RUN WITH US Join us, as we take on the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon. Whether you can run the 6k or the 21k, we've brought in the pros to help you all the way. Watch this space: [Facebook.com/groups/minutestomiles](https://www.facebook.com/groups/minutestomiles)

Sunalini Mathew
Managing Editor

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Readers' Letters

HIT A DOUBLE CENTURY, PLEASE!

Congratulations on completing a century! I have been reading *Prevention* for almost a year and a half and I always find new research, tips and inspiration that make me look forward to the next issue. The story *Power On to Help Your Partner* (in the August issue) made me smile as it is exactly what my husband and I do as a couple to motivate each other while working out together. Here's wishing you great success in the years to come.

—Aswathy S. Nair via e-mail



This letter wins a special prize from Equinox

AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

With the September issue, *Prevention* has proved again that it is the best health magazine. I especially liked the morale-boosting weight-loss success story you featured. I was touched when my 18-year-old daughter asked me to read the article *What's Your Playfulness Quotient*. In that moment I realized that it was what my kids have always wanted me to do. This is the reason I say that for me, *Prevention* is not only a magazine but is like a family member, a friend and a guide whose help and suggestions I will always cherish.

—Bawa Kaur via e-mail

A Suggestion

Prevention is not a magazine that you just flip through off and on. Thanks to the vital information that it offers, it's for keeps. I look forward to reading the columns by health experts, as they are a reliable source of medical advice. Here's a request though—do include more stories on mental health issues like self-harming among children and teenage suicides, to help the readers get a better understanding of the next generation.

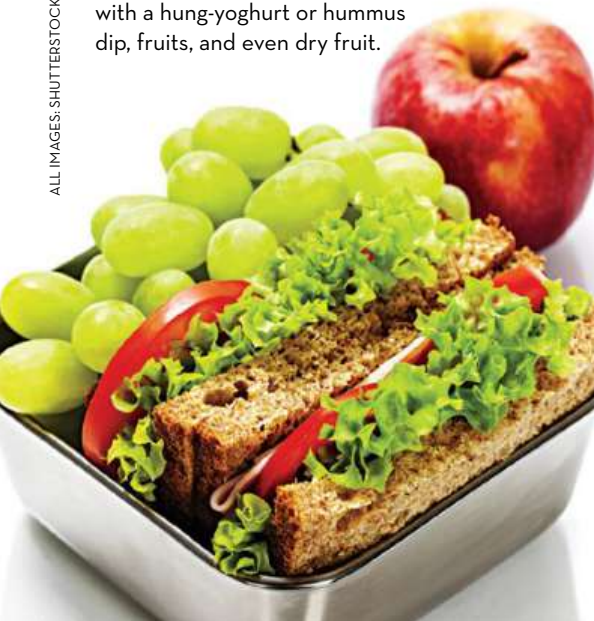
—Manjiree Dhodapkar via e-mail

GET IN TOUCH

We look forward to getting to know you better! Send us your comments, questions or ideas: Write to us at askprevention@intoday.com, or Editor, *Prevention*, 3rd Floor, Film City 8, Sector 16A, NOIDA, UP 201301.

Q When I pack junk food in my child's tiffin box, what can I put in to offset it?

A: The best option is to take the 'junk' factor out of unhealthy foods that kids love, without compromising on the taste. "So go ahead with the burger but make it with healthy ingredients: a wholewheat bun, lettuce, tomato, and a patty that has a mix of veggies, chickpeas and crushed nuts, instead of a fried potato patty and mayo," suggests Delhi-based nutritionist, Neelanjana Singh. Try an apple crumble: top sliced apples with wholewheat flakes, crushed almonds and brown sugar; bake. Or a veg-paneer cutlet. Another option is to add on healthy treats: veggie or cottage cheese sticks with a hung-yoghurt or hummus dip, fruits, and even dry fruit.



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Q: How often can I take an anti-allergy med if I have a seasonal allergy?

A: "Depending on your symptoms, you can take these anti-histamines—fexofenadine (Allegra)/cetirizine (Cetzine)—on a daily basis, but only during the season when you have allergy symptoms (a runny nose, itchy and watery eyes). Most anti-allergy medication works for 4 to 6 hours while some can last up to 12 hours. If you have glaucoma, a thyroid imbalance, prostate problems, epilepsy and high blood pressure, do consult your doctor before taking anti-histamines," says Dr Shubnum Singh, senior consultant, Allergy Clinic, Max Hospital, Delhi. Make sure you have your medicine only with water; never with alcohol.

Ask Prevention



Q How can I lighten dark elbows and knees?

A: Elbows and knees become dark with drying skin and constant friction. You'll also find these areas are slightly thicker than other places. "Use a moisturiser on a daily basis to keep them well-hydrated. For those with visibly dark skin, apply a body lotion with glycolic acid along with a lightening agent like kojic acid—you can try Kosmocare Detan Lotion, a pharma product. It softens and exfoliates dead skin and also helps lighten the dark patches," says Dr Chytra V Anand, dermatologist, Kosmoderma Skin, Hair & Laser Clinic, Bengaluru. If you're in a rush, try chemical peels or microdermabrasion, in consultation with a dermat. And it's not to be repeated within 3 weeks.

Q: Are menstrual cups hygienic and safe to use?

A: Little known in India, menstrual cups are made of medical-grade silicone, which means they are safe to use down there. Each cup is shaped like a bell and is worn inside the vagina to hold menstrual blood; it can be used through the day and night. "Invented in Australia, it is a hygienic and convenient device that sits comfortably within. It is leak-proof and is a better option than a sanitary pad that may irritate the skin by causing friction with prolonged use," says Dr Kiran S Coelho, HOD, gynaecology and obstetrics, Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai. To use, simply insert; remove when full, empty, wash with clean water, and reinsert. It's reusable—once your period is over, sterilize the cup by boiling in water for a few minutes and store.



Meet the team Experts

Prevention works with these leading experts to bring you the best, most authoritative information in every issue.

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

DR ISSAC MATHAI, medical director, SOUKYA International Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru.

CARDIOLOGY

DR ASHOK SETHI, chairman, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute and chairman, Cardiology Council, Fortis Group of Hospitals, New Delhi. He is one of the most renowned interventional cardiologists in the country and has performed a large number of angiographies.

DR K SRINATH REDDY, president, Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi. A consultant with the WHO, he is considered a global authority in his field.

DERMATOLOGY

DR REKHA SHETH is a leading cosmetic dermatologist in Mumbai. She is founder-president, Cosmetology Society of India and runs Yuva, a successful chain of skin clinics.

ENDOCRINOLOGY

DR AMBRISH MITHAL, chairman, Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Medanta - The Medicity, Gurgaon.

DR NIKHIL TANDON, professor of Endocrinology and Metabolism, AIIMS, New Delhi.

ENT

DR ARUN AGGARWAL is director, ENT Department, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi. He is also deputy director general, health services and president, Delhi Medical Council.

FITNESS

NISHA VARMA, Pune-based Reebok University Master Trainer, yoga instructor and an aqua instructor certified by the Federation of International Sports, Aerobics and Fitness, Singapore.

VINATA SHETTY, Mumbai-based Reebok University Master Trainer. She is also a certified trainer from the American College of Sports Medicine.

FEMININE HEALTH/ OBSTETRICS

DR DURU SHAH, chairman of Gynaecoworld and Gynaecoworld Fertility Clinic, Mumbai.

DR INDIRA HINDUJA, consultant gynaecologist, Jaslok Hospital and Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai. She gave India its first GIFT baby in 1988.

DR PUNEET BEDI, consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Indrapastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

DR RAJIV KHOSLA, senior consultant, gastroenterology, Max Super Speciality and Holy Family Hospital, New Delhi. He also runs a special clinic for IBD at Medanta - The Medicity, Gurgaon.

GERIATRICS

DR AB DEY, professor and head, Department of Geriatric Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi.

LABORATORY MEDICINE

DR NAVIN DANG, specialist in laboratory medicine and director, Dr Dang's Lab Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.

MENTAL HEALTH

DR PRABHA CHANDRA, professor of psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru. She specialises in post-natal depression.

DR VIJAY NAGASWAMI, psychiatrist, relationship consultant and author of a series of books on marriage, Chennai.

NEUROLOGY

DR RAJESHKAR REDDI, principal consultant and head of unit, Neurology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi.

NUTRITION

ISHI KHOSLA, clinical nutritionist and founder, www.theweighthonitor.com, and Whole Foods India, and founder, Celiac Society of India.

DR KAMALA KRISHNASWAMY, former president, Nutrition Society

of India and a council member of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences. She is a former director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad.

ONCOLOGY

DR RAJENDRA A BADWE director, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. He is also a renowned cancer surgeon.

DR RAJENDRA KERKAR, professor and head, Department of Gynaecological Oncology at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai.

DR SH ADVANI, director, Medical Oncology, Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre, and chief medical oncologist at the Asian Institute of Oncology, Mumbai.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

DR SANJAY DHAWAN, director, Ophthalmology, Max Healthcare. His professional areas of expertise include cataract, refractive and glaucoma surgery, and medical ophthalmology.

ORTHOPAEDICS

DR ASHOK RAJGOPAL, chairman of Medanta Bone & Joint Institute, Medanta-The Medicity, Gurgaon.

DR PK DAVE, HOD, Orthopaedics and chairman, advisory board, Rockland Hospital, was former director, AIIMS and is an eminent orthopaedic surgeon. He is professor emeritus and former president, National Academy of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

PAEDIATRICS

DR PROF ANUPAM SIBAL, group medical director, Apollo Hospitals. He is also an adjunct professor of Paediatrics at the University of Queensland. His specialisation is paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology.

DR ARVIND TANEJA, advisor, senior consultant, Paediatrics, Max Healthcare, New Delhi. He is the recipient of the 'Distinguished Physician' award of the Delhi Medical Association.



Explore, Get More

CAN'T WAIT? A PEEK AT OUR **NEXT ISSUE...**

Grab a copy of Prevention's November issue for a know-it-all beauty update

- > Beauty mantras that the experts follow
- > Breakthrough research in skin and haircare
- > Organic products that every woman should know of



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HEALING TOUCH

> Turmeric's super-spice status gets a thumbs-up from research; people suffering from osteoarthritis in the knee saw improvements in pain severity and stiffness after imbibing turmeric, according to a study in *Inflammopharmacology*.



FROM MINUTES TO MILES: **THE TRAINING BEGINS**

> The 3rd edition of the *Prevention and Women's Health #RunningChallenge* was launched at Zehen, The Wellness Centre at The Manor, Delhi. Milind Soman came in as chief motivator, while Dr Rana Chengappa, clinical director, sports medicine, AktivOrtho;

Lovneet Batra, sports nutritionist; Nisha Varma, Reebok Master Trainer and Arun Arora, the coach, all formed part of the panel. The training for the 6k and 21k at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon is now underway. Want to join? Write to us at askprevention@intoday.com.



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**FEATURE IN
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Hugs Boson!

The more hugs you get, the less illnesses you'll have! Research from Carnegie Mellon University, published in *Psychological Science*, says that hugs are a perceived form of social support, which means your body reacts positively to the belief that people around you care for your well-being. Greater social support has been linked to better mental and physical health, and a warm envelop was responsible for a third of the protective effect. But you didn't need a reason to hug your child now, did you?





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HOME * HEALTH * HAPPINESS

Health

Steamy Help • Music Mantra • Sleep Easy

Get Hot For A Longer Life

Steam-room devotees have been onto something all along: more time in the sauna could lower your risk of a premature death. When researchers looked at the habits of 2,315 middle-aged men, they found that those who logged 4 to 7 weekly sessions were 50% less likely to develop fatal cardiovascular diseases, and 40% less likely to die young. The longer the sessions (up to 35 minutes), the greater the benefit. Women are likely to see similar results—which, by the way, have nothing to do with sweating out toxins. Sauna time raises your heart rate to levels on par with moderate-intensity exercise, the researchers say. Exercise benefits while sitting still? We're sold.

Source: JAMA Internal Medicine

Music = Brain Protection?

Think Baby Mozart for adults: brain scans of pro musicians revealed a quieting of the genes involved in diseases like Alzheimer's after the musicians played classical tunes for 2 hours. We listeners also likely benefit, says study author Irma Järvelä, associate professor of medical molecular genetics at the University of Helsinki in Finland. It's not just soothing music; your kid's hip-hop will do just fine.

Source: Scientific Reports



Puppy Love

We feed our pets, we walk them, we dress them up in cute little sweaters. In return? They make us healthier. According to a new study published in *Science*, gazing into your dog's eyes increases levels of oxytocin, a hormone that creates feelings of closeness, in both of you—and may also lower your heart disease risk and rev your immune system. Gaze into your pooch's eyes for a lengthy 2 minutes to reap more of the magic chemical benefits.



SHUTTERSTOCK/INDIAPICTURE

The Pill-Free Way to Beat Depression

As we all know, depression doesn't just vanish; it can take lifelong treatment for some people to stay healthy. But for those who'd rather not use medication, mindfulness may work just as well, says surprising new research published in the *Lancet*. In the study, one group of people with depression continued on antidepressants as usual, while another

swapped the meds for mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, a mixture of cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness meditation. After 8 weekly group sessions, an hour of homework a day for 2 months, and 4 optional refresher sessions over the next year, study participants in both groups showed comparable rates of depression recurrence.

TRY IT NOW

For a taste of the mindfulness drug, do this 5-minute exercise from UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center:

Sit with your back straight, feet on the floor, and hands in your lap.

Close your eyes or cast them slightly downwards and breathe naturally.

If your thoughts wander, say "thinking" softly in your mind, then gently return your attention to your breath.

When your timer goes off, notice how you feel. Try to carry that feeling with you throughout the day.

Try a longer guided meditation at marc.ucla.edu or download an app like Headspace or Buddhify for on-the-go mindfulness.

THE SNORING SOLUTION THAT'S **Better Than That Elbow**

These 6 weird muscle-firming moves reduced snoring frequency by 36% in a small new study. Commit to 8 minutes per session, 3 times a day, and you could nix those mid-slumber nudges from the nightly routine.

1 Push the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth and slide it backward 20 times.

2 Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth 20 times.

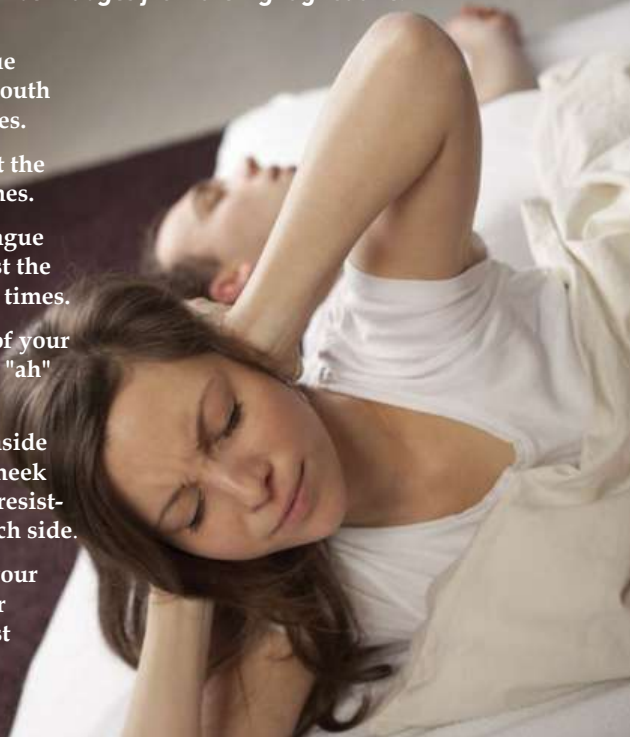
3 Push the back of your tongue down, with the tip against the inside of your front teeth, 20 times.

4 Lift the back of the roof of your mouth like you're saying "ah" for your doctor 20 times.

5 With your index finger inside your mouth, push your cheek away from your teeth while resisting the pressure, 10 times each side.

6 When you swallow, lift your tongue to the roof of your mouth while keeping the rest of your face relaxed.

Source: Chest



1 in 4 That's how many adults never or rarely wear shades, per a recent Vision Council report. Yes, summer's on its way out, but keep those sunnies on, especially from 8 to 10 AM and 2 to 4 PM, when eyes are most at risk. The sun's UV rays—no matter the season—can fuel cataracts and macular degeneration.

Beauty

Hair Care • Quick Fixes • Skin Science

Shampoo Your Hair Stronger

Even if your beauty modus operandi is pretty much the same as it was when you were in your 20s, we're betting you routinely reach out for shampoo and conditioner. And new research confirms that the duo can yield shinier, stronger hair when they contain chelants, the ingredients that remove heavy metals like copper from strands so they won't split, break, or get dull when the metals oxidize in sunlight. Look for common chelants disodium EDTA, tetrasodium EDTA, and sodium citrate on the backs of bottles before you buy.

Source: American cosmetic chemist Jim Hammer, founder of Mix Solutions Consulting; *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*.

Two To Try:

The Body Shop
Banana Shampoo
(₹795) and Alberto VO5
Extra Body Volumizing
Conditioner (₹1,567;
Amazon.in).



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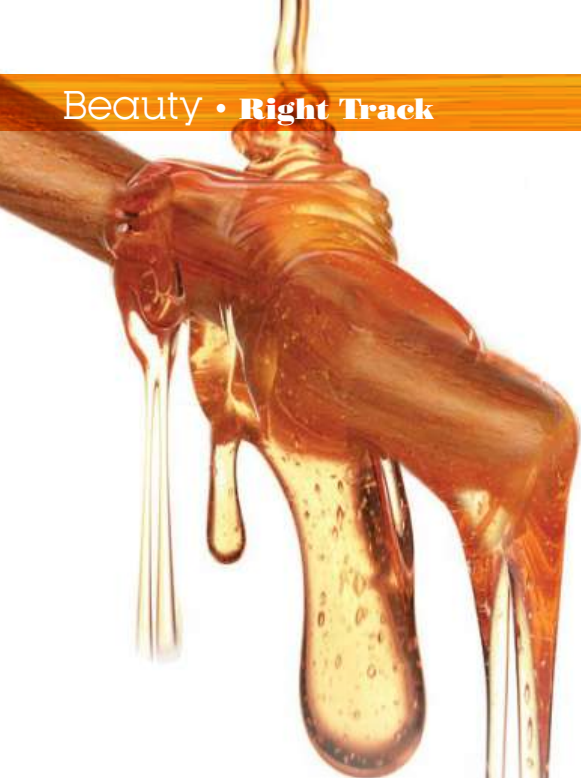
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Waxing Isn't Waning

Most women still groom their bikini area despite irritation and itchiness, a new study says. Waxing is the least irritating route—if you do it right.

1. DON'T DIY. You physically can't pull from the proper angle to remove hair from the root, so a flawless finish will be out of reach, no matter how hard you try.

2. SPEAK UP. Your waxer should apply pressure to the spot immediately after removing the wax (so you feel less pain) and tweeze any strays. If she doesn't, ask.

3. DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Exfoliate daily with a salt or sugar scrub to prevent ingrowns, and follow up with lotion to prep skin for an even better wax next time.

Sources: Journal of Sexual Medicine; Noemi Gruppenmager, founder and CEO of Uni K Wax Centers, US; Jolie Arsenaault, co-founder of Wax Me Too Salons, US.

ONE-WORD ANSWER

Can I take neem supplements without an Rx?

no.

"Even natural substances like neem have a toxicity level," explains Dr Apratim Goel, dermatologist, Cutis Skin Studio, Mumbai. Ingesting neem can lead to gastric distress, so consult your doc. But you can still reap the benefits of this wondrous leaf with neem oil. "Applied locally it moisturizes and softens skin, and can help relieve the symptoms of psoriasis, eczema and dry scaly allergies. Its antifungal properties can also ward off dandruff," she adds.



SHUTTERSTOCK/INDIAPICTURE

Nutrition

Coffee Pot • Fibre Fill • Food Now

Cold brew has finally hit the big time, with chains like Starbucks now offering the velvety smooth beverage.

The Case For Cold Brew

Cold brew is steeped for hours, but in cold water, so it's joe alright, but with up to 70% less acid than regular coffee and no bitter bite. Meaning it tastes great black (read: the zero-calorie way). Less acid also means less digestive distress and damage to your teeth. DIY: steep 1 cup of coarsely-ground coffee overnight in 4 cups of cold water. Pour the concentrate through a sieve lined with cheesecloth; in a glass, add one part of concentrate to one part cold water. Drink up.

RECIPE COURTESY: WWW.PREVENTION.COM;
PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY KATE ROEMER;
FOOD STYLING BY LESLEY STOCKTON;
PROP STYLING BY KRISTINE TREVINO

Magic Bullet

NASA has proposed quinoa as ideal for long-term space missions because of its optimal carb-protein ratio. “A ½ cup of quinoa has twice the protein, and more iron and fibre, than a ½ cup of rice”, says Suman Agarwal, author of *Unjunked*. Cook quinoa in water or broth in a 1:2 ratio for 15 minutes and rinse; sub for rice, semolina or couscous in any recipe.

Quinoa Upma

Heat ¼ c extra-virgin olive oil in a big pot. Add 1½ c chopped red bell pepper, 1½ c chopped onion, 1½ c chopped cucumber, and ½ tsp salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until the pepper starts to soften. Add 3 c quinoa. Stir to coat. Add 6 c low-sodium fat-free chicken broth. Bring to a boil and cover, then reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 20 minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed. **P**



RECIPE FROM PREVENTION.COM.
IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/INDIAPICTURE

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FOR MANAGING TOMORROW

Gut Good

A potent plant extract, psyllium husk is popular for its digestion-friendly benefits.

BY PALLAVI SHANKAR


In a world that's having a moment with high-fibre foods and herbs, psyllium husk (it comes from the outer covering of the seeds of the plant—*Plantago ovata*) is undoubtedly a health hero. We know it as Isabgol but there are other brands too and they're available at your local chemist.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

"Psyllium is a soluble fibre that helps relieve constipation through its bulk-forming power. When this husk comes in contact with water, it swells and forms a gelatin-like-mass that transports waste through the intestines," says Ritika Samaddar, regional head, south zone, department of nutrition and dietetics, Max

Healthcare, Delhi. It is this quality that makes psyllium effective in treating constipation as well as diarrhoea.

IS THAT ALL IT DOES?

"It's heart healthy too as the fibre content helps lower cholesterol, and may also assist in weight loss," says Samaddar. Add a couple of teaspoons to water or a cup of dough to make fibre-rich rotis. "We add it to soup at dinner for people with irritable bowel syndrome or chronic constipation," says Dr Shijoe Mathew, an Ayurvedic physician at Ananda—In The Himalayas, Rishikesh. 





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Your Body On Fibre

**Eating 10 g more fibre can cut your risk of premature death by 10%.
Here, 7 more reasons to hit the recommended daily dose of 25 g.**

Brain

Adding 7 g daily can cut stroke risk by 7%.

Heart

Heart disease risk drops by 9% for each 7 g consumed daily, thanks to fibre's effective cholesterol-lowering powers.

Waistline

People who simply increased their daily fibre intake to 30 g or more lost nearly as much weight as those on a more complicated diet plan that included restricting calories.

Kidneys

Getting more than 21 g of fibre daily stands to reduce risk of kidney stones by 22%.

Lungs

Dietary fibre soothes systemic inflammation and may slash risk of inflammatory diseases like Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)—an umbrella term for progressive lung diseases like chronic bronchitis and non-reversible asthma.

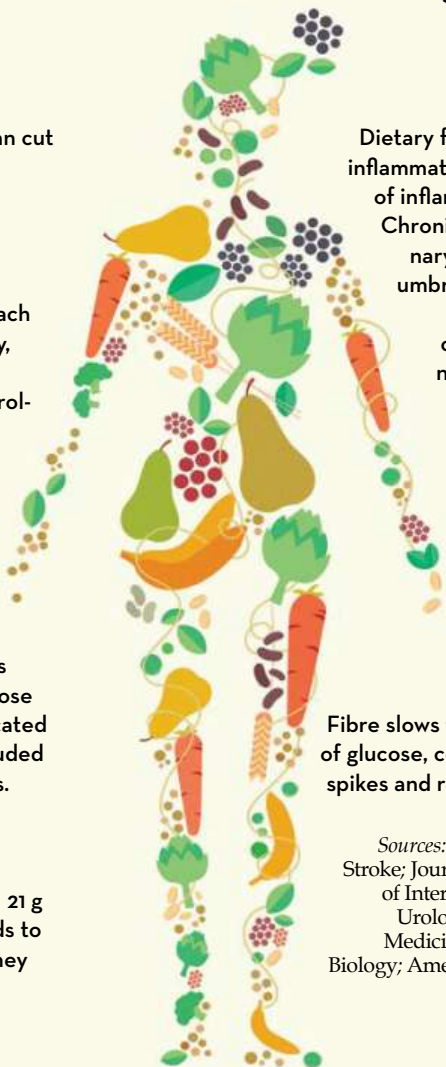
Gut

Eating more fibre can balance levels of healthy bacteria, aiding digestion.

Blood Sugar

Fibre slows the body's absorption of glucose, controlling blood sugar spikes and reducing diabetes risk.

Sources: British Medical Journal; Stroke; Journal of Nutrition; Annals of Internal Medicine; Journal of Urology; American Journal of Medicine; Journal of Molecular Biology; American Journal of Clinical Nutrition; *Mayo Clinic*





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Tomatoes Against Cancer

Turns out the good old tomato has breast-cancer-fighting properties, especially in post-menopausal women. A study in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* found that the lycopene and other antioxidants in the bright-coloured vegetable have the ability to raise levels of a hormone called adiponectin that helps regulate blood sugar and fat—major risk factors for cancer. "Include tomatoes and other lycopene-rich foods in your diet—sun-dried tomatoes are the richest form," says Suman Agarwal, Mumbai-based nutritionist. "Avoid overdoing it though—2-6 are okay, and use them both cooked and raw." And no, tomato ketchup doesn't count.

Yoghurt For Anxiety

Frequently get butterflies in your stomach? A study published in *Psychiatry Research* says that eating fermented foods (yoghurt, kimchi) helps in reducing social anxiety symptoms. The exact reason is not clear but previous research points at the probiotic connection. "As the gut becomes less inflamed, some anxiety-related symptoms are visibly reduced," explains Matthew Hilimire, lead author of the study.



16th

OCTOBER IS WORLD FOOD

DAY and India is home to 25% of the world's hungry. Let's do our bit.

» Volunteer with a charity that collects leftover food from restaurants for the less fortunate (Robinhoodarmy.com).

» Donate to NGOs that distribute food to the needy (Annakshetra).

» Sponsor kitchen equipment for a food community service or a food-based NGO (Akshaypatra.org).



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The Boneless, Skinless, and Anything-but-Boring Chicken Breast

We've all seen our favourite bird—favourite protein, even—look its worst. But when things go right, it's cheap, quick, and bursting with flavour. Here, three ways to give your old chicken some new life.



Stir-fry it.

A quick sauté keeps chicken from drying out. Heat **1-2 Tbsp olive oil**, add **3 sliced chicken breasts**, and sauté until cooked through, about 4 minutes. Sauté **3 cups sliced veggies**, add chicken, and season dish with **soya sauce**, **red chilli flakes**, and **dark sesame oil**.

Poach it.

Gently poaching keeps chicken breast tender and moist. Bring water to a low boil; for flavour, add **garlic, onion, or herbs**. Add **chicken breast** and simmer, about 15 minutes.



Nuggetize it.

Fancy up the baked nugget. Heat oven to 220°C. Cut **3 chicken breasts** into 2" nuggets. Dip each into flour, egg, and **toasted bread crumbs** seasoned with **salt and pepper**. Bake until cooked through, 12 to 15 minutes.

Fitness

Walking Revolution • Chair Exercises

Every Minute Counts (Really!)

One more reason to trash an all-or-nothing workout mentality: walking 20 minutes a day could improve your quality of life. After following more than 3,34,000 adults for 12 years, researchers found that, compared with inactive people, those who consistently logged at least 20 daily minutes of moderate exercise were more than 20% less likely to die prematurely than their chair-bound counterparts. "Even a brief amount of activity can have effects on blood pressure, aerobic fitness and cholesterol," says study author Ulf Ekelund. In a nutshell: anything that gets you moving keeps your organs performing like a well-oiled engine.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition



Consider This

Women who own dogs are 14% more likely to walk over 150 minutes per week than those who don't.

Brisk walking for 2 hours a week or a similar form of moderate exercise can cut your risk of breast cancer by 18%.

5 Surprisingly Simple Ways To Create Your Own Walking Group

Research confirms what we've known all along: you'll walk more often if you bring a few friends. Here's how to organize the perfect peregrinating posse.



1 Recruit right. "Don't be afraid to post a call for members on Facebook," says walking coach Michele Stanten, author of *Walk Off Weight* (₹1,252, Amazon.in). You can also ask at work, your colony, or yoga class.

2 Aim for a minimum of 2 other people. "This way you'll be more likely to have at least one walking buddy if someone can't show," says Stanten.

3 Fix a time. And make sure that the time works for you. If you're the leader, you can't be the one skipping out.

4 Keep it close. That 20-minute drive to the park gets old fast. Walk right in your own neighbourhood, or tie walks to other weekly events. For instance, if you already meet your friends for coffee, start there and sip pre- or post-stroll.

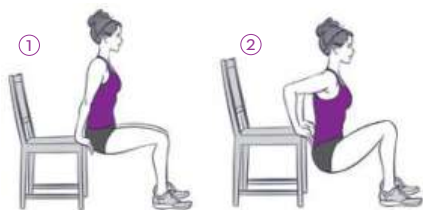
5 Make it fun. "Read the same book or watch the same TV show and discuss it while you're walking," suggests Stanten. "If you don't know each other, do icebreakers to build relationships—more reason to keep on stepping."

Source: British Journal of Sports Medicine

4 Exercises You Can Do While Sitting

Feeling lazy? Work out while sitting! Steal these moves from US-based trainers Jimmy Minardi and Jessica Bellofatto.

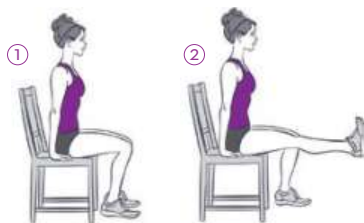
BY KATE BAYLESS



Chair Dips

Benefits: Works shoulders and triceps

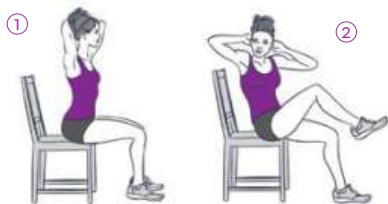
How to do it: Sit on the edge of a chair with your arms by your sides, palms on the edge of the seat, fingers over the edge (1). Shift your body weight forward and lower down off the chair (2). Hold your body suspended for 5 counts and then push up back onto the seat. Work up to 3 sets of 10 reps.



Leg Extensions

Benefits: Works hips and thighs

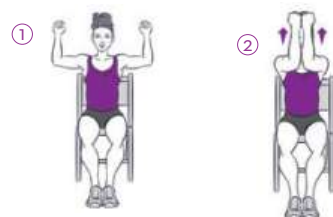
How to do it: Sit at the edge of your chair, arms by your sides (1). Extend your right leg out straight and flex your foot so that just the right heel is on the floor. Lift your leg up as high as you can without rounding your back (2). Hold for 3 counts then lower. Repeat with the other leg. Do 3 sets of 10 reps on each leg.



Oblique Twist

Benefits: Works obliques and core

How to do it: Sit on a chair with both hands behind your head (1). Twist your torso so that your elbow touches your right knee (2). Return to start; repeat on the other side. Do 3 sets of 10 reps.



Chest Squeeze

Benefits: Works your chest muscles

How to do it: Make a goalpost with your arms (1). Bring your forearms in front. Press them together and lift arms 1 inch (2). Return to start, squeezing your shoulder blades. Repeat as long as you can.



WINNING *Health Over*

BY SUNALINI MATHEW

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
G VENKET RAM

GAUTAMI TADIMALLA has a body that belies her age. Ironically, this isn't what this 46-year-old Tamil cinema actor worked towards. Her journey in the last 11 years after breast cancer has been to balance mind and body.



G

autami shows up at the shoot a couple of hours late but with boxes of cupcakes so pretty and apologies so genuine we're won over. That, and the way she looks—tall, slim (well, she did say she was a size 'S'). So there's graciousness and poise. Then there's professionalism: "I'll wear anything you want me to," she says, sportingly. As she tries on dresses, we take up the hemline, asking if she's okay with it going all the way up. She's unexpectedly mischievous: "Well, if

you've got slim legs, why not show them off right!" She has us.

We meet for the interview well after sundown, post-shoot, at a cafe in Chennai. It's got the late evening clatter of people catching up after work on a weekday. But Gautami is in no hurry. She orders specifically: give me broccoli, mushrooms, quinoa, with a dressing of olive oil and salt; no pepper or butter; and don't boil it, sauté it." It fits into her dietary restrictions: she discovered she was gluten and dairy intolerant years ago, much before it was 'a thing'.

Food Now


When her daughter was 2, (Subhalaxmi is now 16), her stress levels were at an all-time high. "I believe stress can kick-start



This body is about years of yoga and diet control.



"You know when something doesn't suit you, whether it's food or drink; just don't put it in your body then."



an intolerance or allergy if you have a predisposition to it," she says. She'd have constant heartburn and acid reflux, and couldn't figure out why, because she didn't drink or smoke. "So I started a process of elimination," she says. No, she didn't keep a food diary: "One can't be that obsessive."

First went milk and milk products, after which the acid reflux was a lot better; then went gluten. "My life changed. I started thinking clearly, my skin cleared up, my moods improved. And that annoying lower belly—it finally went." She can eat some dairy, like the large ice cream she ordered at the shoot, and she will indulge in cake occasionally, like she does tonight, but she's clear: "My body, my health, my

appearance, is a direct outcome of what I put in it."

Stress Check

This body awareness didn't come easily. When she was young, Gautami says she lived life on a very elemental basis and went with her instinct, right from practical decisions to her state of mind. The result: she was never worked up or tense. "I'm not a very social person, and I was very happy with my family, my books and dogs," she says.

Somehow, towards her late 20s and early 30s, the stress piled up. Her marriage wasn't doing well, her parents died within a year of each other, she had toxemia during her pregnancy, she ended up being close to 90 kg after she delivered, and soon she was a single parent. It wasn't easy moving around with a baby after a C-sec that left her almost bed-ridden for 3 months. She dropped the weight with exercise, but the stress didn't go.

It's A Girl

Gautami always wanted a daughter and through a process of give and take, has developed a relationship with her that is close, yet has space for growth.

» She was keen on having a baby by 30. "There's such a thing as an optimum age that's best for you and your baby."

» She was mostly a full-time mom till her daughter was 5. "She had the whole sparkly dress for her birthday and 30 kids rampaging around the house."

» She speaks to her about healthy relationships. "Bend for a friend, but stand up for yourself."

» She talks about healthy habits. "I tell her she has breast cancer in her medical history and her greatest defences are diet and exercise."

» She keeps her finger on the pulse, but allows her to make decisions. "Having had cancer when she was 5 gave me a clear perception of if something happens to me tomorrow, I want her to be able to stand on her own feet, to be able to make fundamental decisions about her existence and her well being."



Cancer Comes

"It came to a point at which I was so stressed, that it became a personality trait. I had never experienced this before, so I didn't know how to deal with it." And because she had no genetic component and no other physical markers, except the obesity, which was short-lived, she believes it was this constant state of trauma that her mind and body was being subjected to that was the cause of cancer. The diagnosis came through a mammography on February 14. The reason they'd caught it early was because she was faithful in her breast self-exams. She'd

felt the lump and went to the doc. "I've grown up with a practical approach to illness. My dad was a radiation oncologist and my mother, a pathologist. I knew it was one of the most treatable cancers, we'd caught it early and I was young enough to fight it."

She was "never bothered by 1 breast looking wonky," and the thought of losing her hair didn't matter at all. She's exasperated by women who don't want to go in for a check-up because they're scared they might actually have cancer and then have to go through chemo and lose their hair. "Prioritize dude. You've got to see tomorrow, and what this world has to offer."

Her hair was a big part of her identity, so she decided to go the gradual route, especially for her

"Listen to your body and arm yourself with practical information, so you know what's going in."

OPENING SPREAD: DRESS: KENNETH COLE; SANDAL: STEVE MADDEN; EARRINGS: BRACELET AND RING: ACCESSORIZE;
MIDDLE SPREAD: TOP: JEAN AND SANDALS: MODEL'S OWN; PENDANT NECKLACE, BRACELET AND RING: SWAROVSKI; THIS
SPREAD: DRESS: MARKS & SPENCER; PENDANT NECKLACE, BRACELET AND RING: SWAROVSKI; EARRINGS: ACCESSORIZE.

On Relationships...

"What makes my blood run cold is the kind of things children, especially girl children, then women, are putting up with because they think that's their lot in life. So much of it goes back to childhood, because you're conditioned to think that way, so you accept and put up with nonsense. It's not okay for anyone to inflict hurt on you—physical, mental or emotional. You need to address it when someone's hurting you. In a relationship, the dominant person will dump a lot of crap on you. There's a difference between give and take and between being dumped on."

daughter: she cut it to shoulder-length, then shorter, and then just before the surgery, her partner, Kamal Haasan, buzzed it. He supported her through, "but really, nobody can carry any of it for you. It's not like a broken arm. They can just be there, and be supportive," she says.

Now Or Never

A lumpectomy, 6 sessions of chemo, each at a 3-week gap, 40 cycles of radiation, later, Gautami asked herself the fundamental question: What do I take away from this experience? "I realized I didn't want to live this life of stress and constant tension. I

needed to go back to the kind of calmness, the centred quality I used to have. It's easier said than done. It took me 2 or 3 years just to start thinking of tomorrow, or next week, because you don't have the confidence that there will be a tomorrow."

More than anything, she has learned to respect her body. "It's an engineering marvel. It works so hard for you. By the time the body starts protesting, it's been through an incredible amount of punishment. When you abuse your body, it's like saying this is my house so I'll spit in it because I feel like it. That's so wrong on so many levels."

She has switched to organic almost completely, uses cold-pressed virgin gingelly and olive oil, encourages wholesome fats, and whole foods. She will read labels religiously, looking out for HFCS, nature-identical, added colour, and will call them out to her daughter. All this, with a sense of mindfulness.

It is logical then, that she practises yoga. "It's not about wearing nice yoga clothes and doing 108 surya namaskars. It's about syncing your breathing with your movement in the asanas." But she's just as comfortable going to the gym or working out to a DVD. "Jane Fonda has brought me back from the brink so many times! I've done those exercises when I was 90 kilos and not 1 injury."

She pauses to ask me if I'd like some warm water, sensing I have a runny nose. Her life is not just about being aware of her own body. She reaches out with warmth and concern to other people too. **12**



Dr Krishna Mohan Mallavarapu

Dr K M Mallavarapu completed his DNB in general medicine and DM in Medical Oncology. He is a Consultant Medical Oncologist, Basavatarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital, Hyderabad.

DOC'S MESSAGE

Be smart; be breast aware. If you believe that you benefitted by reading this, spread the word to your neighbours, especially your house-help who may not be able to read and understand.

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a condition where a group of cells in the breast lose control of their normal behaviour and learn to live longer, proliferate limitlessly, become disorganized, and invade their boundaries. Certain changes occur in the genetic make up of some cells viz. mutations, which constitute the "initializing events". Normally, the body can eliminate such abnormal cells, but some such cells escape the check post. When a number of such cells acquire additional abnormalities in their neighbourhood called "promotional events", this group become immortal and turn into cancer. These cells replace normal cells and tissues in the organ of origin, become more disorganized, acquire additional functional chromosomal abnormalities (progression factors) and start invading the boundaries of the original organ (such as the breast), thereby spreading to other organs via blood stream or lymphatics.

How prevalent is breast cancer in the world?

It is the most common cancer amongst women worldwide. The incidence (number of new cases diagnosed per year) ranges from 27 per 1,00,000 women in middle and east Africa to 96 per 1,00,000 women in Western Europe. In India, the incidence is 26 cases per 1,00,000 women. In a five-year span, 93 per 1,00,000 women in India suffer from it, both old and new cases.

READER *Question*

Q: At what age should I start talking to my daughter about breast health and how?

A: 20 is a good time to start. Teach her to observe her own breasts, feel (palpate) once every menstrual cycle, from the 5th-7th day from the period. The idea is to understand the look and feel of normal breast so that an abnormality can be noticed early. If any abnormality is noticed, consult your doctor immediately.

Dr.Reddy's



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Dr C N Patil

Dr C N Patil is a senior consultant medical oncologist at Apollo Hospitals, Bengaluru. He did his medical oncology training from Cancer Institute, Adyar, Chennai. His areas of special interest are breast cancer and multiple myeloma.

DOC'S MESSAGE

Breast cancer can be detected early and can be cured. The fear should not be of cancer; the fear should be of a late diagnosis.

Q How prevalent is breast cancer in India?

In India, 18 people per 1 lakh have breast cancer. Though this is a lot less than Western countries, the disease is on the rise here. The problem in India is of late detection. In the West, awareness is high and screening is active. In our country, screening is almost not present as a matter of course and awareness is negligible. More than anything, people are shy to report a lump, with the result that 60-70% are diagnosed in the advanced stages of cancer, in stage 3. In the West, the same number is diagnosed at stage 1. If we are able to catch the disease early, doctors can provide more effective interventions, and outcomes are better.

Q Is breast cancer curable?

Yes, breast cancer is one of the most curable solid malignancies. The 10-year survival rate of stage 1 and 2 is more than 90%. Even in stage 3, it is 70 %. Stage 4 patients too survive for a longer period than other cancers, with the current treatment. Breast cancer treatment is individualised. There are three modalities for treatment: surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. All three are not needed for every patient. If detected later treatment modalities get more complex and toxicity increases.

READER Question

Q: At what age shall I start a breast self-exam?

A: While the ideal age is 18-20 years, the earlier you start the better. It can help you become familiar with what's normal and what's not. Knowing the proper way of doing a breast self exam is also essential to avoid unnecessary investigations. That said, if upon examination, you discover a painless lump that is hard and doesn't move and/or you have bloody nipple discharge, seek medical consultation.

Dr.Reddy's



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Dr Manish K Singhal

Dr Manish K Singhal is senior consultant in Medical Oncology, and is Noida- and Delhi-based. He is trained at apex institute All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS, Delhi). Apart from this, he is the best exam awardee for topping the ESMO (European Society of Medical Oncology) annual exam 2013, being the only Indian to achieve this. He is the executive Committee Member of ISMPO and Joint secretary Oncology Forum Delhi.

DOC'S MESSAGE

All women need to be aware of the changes happening in their breast. And for this they need to understand the importance of breast self examination, which should be performed once in a month from the age of 25 years, taking about 5 minutes.

What are the common symptoms associated with breast cancer?

A lump, which is usually hard, is the most common symptom. Sometimes bloody discharge from the nipple, inversion or deviation of the nipple, puckering of the skin of the breast or lump in the axilla (the armpit) may also be present, alone or in addition to the above symptoms. In order to make sure that the breast is healthy, this is the way to do the breast self-exam: it should be done with the flat of the fingers, pressing against the chest wall feeling for any lump. Premenopausal women are advised to do it at the end of their menstrual cycle. Any abnormality detected should be brought to the notice of a specialist.

What are the risk factors of breast cancer?

The risk factors include hereditary and lifestyle issues. These are: a family history, the early onset of menarche, late menopause, obesity, smoking, excessive alcohol intake, an overdose of stress, getting pregnant after the age of 30, and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). An annual mammography (X-ray of the breast) with or without an ultrasonography of both breasts is recommended after the age of 40 for screening purposes. However, this depends on what your doctor advises. So do consult a medical oncologist to assess risks.

Dr.Reddy's 

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Dr Indranil Ghosh

Dr Indranil Ghosh completed his MD and DM in Medical Oncology from AIIMS, New Delhi. He is a Consultant Medical Oncologist at Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals, Kolkata.

DOC'S MESSAGE

Do a breast self-examination every month and report to a doctor if you find anything suspicious. Women often do not disclose breast lumps for many months, only advancing the disease.

Q Does genetics play a role in breast cancer?

Some genes that predispose a person to cancer can be transmitted from generation to generation, through either the mother's or father's side. A classical example is the BRCA gene. It puts women at risk of breast and ovarian cancer. This type of transmission can be seen by the following factors:

- a.** Multiple cancers within a family
- b.** Cancers occurring at an earlier age than expected
- c.** Two or more cancers in an individual: multiple cancers of the same type (e.g., breast cancer in both breasts) or of different types (e.g., breast cancer and ovarian cancer in the same individual)
- d.** Cases of male breast cancer (which is otherwise very rare)

Nowadays, these mutations (BRCA 1 and 2) can be tested in high-risk individuals. If tested positive, appropriate measures can be initiated to reduce the risk of future cancers not only in that person but also in the next of kin.

Q How can I assess if I am at a high risk of breast cancer?

Any woman can have breast cancer but a few risk factors increase the chances. These are:

Age. The risk of developing breast cancer increases as a woman ages.

Past history. A woman who has had breast cancer in one breast has a 1-2% chance per year of developing a second breast cancer in her opposite breast.

Family history of breast cancer. A woman with a first-degree relative who has the disease has twice the risk of developing breast cancer as compared to people who do not.

A past history of ovarian cancer. Breast cancer gene mutations, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, increase the risk of ovarian and breast cancers.

Hormonal factors. A woman's production of oestrogen and progesterone only decreases at menopause. Long-term exposure to these hormones increases risk.

Dr.Reddy's



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Dr BK Smruti

BK Smruti is a consultant medical oncologist and hematologist at Bombay Hospital Institute of Post Graduate Medical Sciences, Mumbai

DOC'S MESSAGE

Making a few easy modifications in lifestyle can help women reduce the risk of breast cancer. Remember, prevention is better than cure.

Q What are some lifestyle changes to decrease the risk of breast cancer?

We are what we eat, drink and think. So lifestyle plays a huge role in the way our body reacts to threats. Basic changes in lifestyle can help reduce the risk of breast cancer.

- Eat healthy and embrace a diet rich in antioxidants.
- Keep your weight in check - obesity increases the risk of breast cancer.
- Drink little or no alcohol as it alters oestrogen metabolism in the body.
- Quit smoking. Long-term smokers are at a 24% higher risk than non-smokers.
- Increase your physical activity. Walking alters oestrogen metabolism to your advantage.
- Opt for early motherhood and breastfeed for at least a year.
- Minimise the use of HRT.

Q Are there ways to reduce the risk of breast cancer?

There are both modifiable and non-modifiable risks. In terms of factors that are beyond our control, genetic breast cancer constitutes 10% only. Women predisposed to a risk should have regular breast examinations, starting with MRI of breasts at a younger age. In consultation with their doctor, they could also try risk-reducing strategies, which include surgery and medication. Surgeries should be considered after full risk assessment including genetic testing and counselling.

READER *Question*

Q: My mother had breast cancer. They say these things skip a generation. Is that true?

A: The most common faulty genes responsible for hereditary breast cancer are BRCA1 & BRCA2. Someone who carries these genes is at a high risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Their children, both male and female, each have a 50% chance of inheriting the genes.

Dr.Reddy's



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Dr Rejiv Rajendranath

Dr Rejiv Rajendranath is Consultant Medical Oncologist, Integrated Cancer Care Group, Apollo Specialty Hospitals Chennai.

DOC'S MESSAGE

Breast cancer has been considered a disease of middle-aged women. Bad lifestyle habits have led to an increasing incidence in the young too. Making healthy choices brings down risks.

Q What is the preliminary self-screening method for breast cancer?

A simple self breast examination is key. Look at the breasts in front of the mirror to carefully notice any changes including bulging and dimpling. In the same position, raise arms in front of the mirror. Look out for unusual discharge including bloody discharge from the nipples. Feel your breasts with the flat of your palms to look for any swelling. Feel both the breasts while standing up or during your bath. This needs to be done at least once a month. The second step is a clinical breast examination by your family physician or oncologist at least once in 6 months. Your first visit shall provide an ideal opportunity for you to discuss the techniques of a self breast examination with your physician.

Q Do you have any advice for screening in patients who are at a high risk for breast cancer?

A history of breast cancer among first degree relatives, breast cancer in the family occurring younger than 45 years and multiple cancers among close family members, should make a woman consider visiting an oncologist for advice on screening. This includes genetic screening for BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutation. Molecular testing for these genes is available in India, but needs to be judiciously used. A mammogram or ultrasonogram needs to be done earlier than the usual 40 years annually. This modality helps significantly in early detection, can result in simpler treatment, and has higher cure rates. Newer digital mammograms are friendlier and cause little discomfort. An MRI of the breast may also be used as a screening test. If a family has BRCA gene positivity, discuss options such as chemoprevention, breast and ovary removal with your doctor.

Dr.Reddy's 

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Dr Chetan Dilip Deshmukh

Dr Chetan Dilip Deshmukh did his DNB in Internal Medicine and DM (Medical Oncology) from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. He is a consultant at Ruby Hall Clinic, Pune.

DOC'S MESSAGE

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among urban women in India. If detected early, it is curable; new treatment has fewer side effects than before, and better chances of success.

Q Are there treatment options available exclusively for breast cancer?

There is no exclusive treatment available for breast cancer. Chemotherapy and radiation is used for all kinds of cancer. There is breast conservation in which women with breast cancer who have a small breast lump can save their breast. The tumour and a wide margin of normal tissue around it are surgically excised, and the lymph glands in the armpit are excised too. So a normal contour of the breast is maintained for aesthetic reasons. It is mandatory to follow this treatment with radiotherapy. If done properly, the breast conserving treatment is as effective as complete removal of the breast (mastectomy) in controlling cancer. However, it has to be performed after adequate counselling.

Q What is a mastectomy?

Mastectomy is the complete surgical removal of the breast and lymph glands in the armpit. Both these procedures are performed with the same incision, and hence 2 separate scars can be avoided. This is one of the standard and time-tested treatments for breast cancer. The technique has been modified over the last few decades to its present-day version. Contrary to popular belief, patients may require additional treatment (chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy) even after a mastectomy based on the histopathology report. Mastectomy is a commonly performed surgery in India, due to the large size of breast lump at presentation. Few women opt for immediate reconstruction of breast after the procedure. Mastectomy is also the standard procedure for women undergoing prophylactic surgery. This surgery is performed in women who have tested positive for the BRCA gene mutation.



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Dr Gurpreet Singh

Dr Gurpreet Singh is a professor in the Department of Surgery, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh. He is a general surgeon with a special interest in diseases of the breast.

DOC'S MESSAGE

"Early detection saves lives, so increasing the awareness about breast cancer is important. It may help women look at a screening mammography as it is the best method for early detection."

Q What is a prophylactic mastectomy? When is it advised?

Prophylactic mastectomy is the removal of a breast which does not contain any cancer. This is done in two situations:

Situation 1: The patient has breast cancer on one side and gets the other breast removed as well. This may again have two scenarios: one, where the woman has a genetic predisposition to breast cancer, which means the chance of her developing cancer in the breast is very high; two, where the woman may not have a genetic predisposition to breast cancer, which means the risk of developing breast cancer in the opposite breast is about 10% in 10 years' time.

Situation 2: The patient has no breast cancer but has a genetic predisposition to developing it. Under these circumstances the lifetime risk of developing the disease can vary from 40 to 70%. The woman may opt to get both her breasts removed. When this is done, it is usually accompanied by bilateral breast reconstruction.

Q How does a woman cope with a breast cancer-related surgery?

The immediate problems of surgery are not very severe. The woman is up and about the same evening and is able to look after herself the next day. The tougher proposition is to cope with the loss of a breast. With advances in surgery, breast preservation is now the norm. In cases where the breast cannot be saved, it can be reconstructed.

READER *Question*

Q: I have a benign breast cyst. Does this increase my chances of getting breast cancer?

A: Breast cysts can be simple or complex. Complex cysts have a chance of harbouring cancer in them while simple cysts do not. Simple cysts do not increase the chance of subsequent breast cancer provided there are no other changes in the breast.

Dr.Reddy's



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I've had a mastectomy. How do I begin to rediscover femininity when it comes to intimacy?

Sabreena, 44
CHENNAI


Each woman is different in the way she may react to having had a mastectomy. Some women may falsely believe that they are no longer attractive, equating the removal of a breast with the loss of sexiness. Some report fears of rejection from current or prospective partners, a lowered sense of value, negative body image, and a host of other unpleasant feelings born out of misplaced beliefs and fearful imaginings. If you feel any of this, first acknowledge it to yourself and then honestly discuss it with your partner if you have one. Communication between partners is often the first casualty of any

Answers •


Radhika Chandiramani Intimacy Now



major medical procedure, with each one afraid to talk openly for fear of hurting or upsetting the other. It may also be that right now sex is not your topmost priority, but connection with your partner is. Talk about it so that both of you know what is going on and do not arrive at false conclusions that may damage your intimacy.

There may be pain or reduced sensation in the removed breast area. Your partner may be worried about what feels good and what does not to you, so communicate about that as well. Reduced feelings of sexual desire and vaginal dryness leading to pain during sex may be a side-effect of medication, so it would be best to have a frank chat with your oncologist. Some women re-connect with their body and sexual feelings using a vibrator or other sex toys. To make sex more pleasurable, some use a vaginal lubricant. Some use a prosthesis under a sexy bra or other lingerie and some avoid the woman-on-top position. Some opt for reconstructive surgery. Some join a support group to share experiences. Whatever you do, keep your own counsel and trust your feelings. 

RADHIKA CHANDIRAMANI is the founder of TARSHI, an organisation that works on issues of sexuality. She is a trained clinical psychologist.

 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com;
Visit the FAQs page at www.tarshi.net or call 011-26472229, Mon to Fri 9.30 am to 5.30 pm



My daughter has lice. Is a herbal option better than shampoo?

Rajni, 37
SURAT

The efficacy and safety of herbal anti-lice products sold in India remains unverified and unsubstantiated. A study conducted in the US and Canada has found that over 99% of head lice are resistant to conventional treatment with permethrin-containing products (such as Perlice) due to a DNA mutation. Some shampoos also have this. Do check the ingredients list.

One study estimated the prevalence of head lice in India between 16.6% to 59.7% in primary school pupils. Head lice feed by biting the scalp and sucking blood. The itchy feeling is not due to biting, but due to an allergy to the lice.


Since not everyone is allergic, chances are that your child may not complain of the problem at all. In those who are allergic, itching can take up to three months to develop. The best way to detect lice is to comb hair weekly using a fine-toothed comb with a tooth spacing of 0.2-0.3 mm.

Check all household members and other close contacts (like the house help), and treat those with an infestation. You will need a one-time application of these medicines if you have short hair. Those with longer-than-shoulder-length hair may need a second. Treatment options include:


- Benzyl alcohol 5% for children over the age of 6 months. Never apply to infants under 6 months.

- Malathion 0.5% for those 2 years or older.

- Newer agents, topical Spinosad 0.9% and topical Ivermectin 0.5% for children 4 years and older are effective just after a single use.

Wash scarves, pillowcases, bedding, clothing, and towels used by the infested person in the 2-day period just before treatment, in hot water with temperature higher than 53.5°C for 5 minutes. Dry-clean items that cannot be washed, or seal them in plastic bags for 2 weeks. Soak combs in hot water for 5-10 minutes. 

DR CHANDRA M GULHATI is Editor, *Monthly Index of Medical Specialities*.

 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



Is breast cancer risk just being hyped for unnecessary testing?

Sumeeta Chauhan,
DELHI

There is a fine line between advocacy and creating a scare. A number of women with average risk (one member of the family affected with breast cancer over the age of 40) get genetic testing done. It is expensive (at about ₹50,000), and unnecessary, especially without adequate genetic counselling. Here are the main myths about the disease, dispelled.

MYTH We know well what causes breast cancer

FACT We do not know what causes breast cancer. There are, however, well recognized risk factors. Being a woman and increasing age are the 2 most important factors. Other known risk factors are: previously diagnosed breast cancer; a strong

family history; the early onset of menstrual period (before age 12); late menopause (after age 55); not having children and having a first child after age 30; not breast-feeding; long-term use of hormone replacement therapy and obesity (particularly after menopause).

MYTH Most breast lumps are cancers

FACT Nine out of 10 breast lumps are not cancerous. However, it is vital to investigate the breast lump by way of triple assessment (clinical breast examination by a specialist, bilateral mammogram, and ultrasound-guided core needle biopsy) in order to obtain a definitive diagnosis.

MYTH A breast self-examination is what one needs for early detection

FACT A breast self examination (BSE) is a check for lumps, done at the same time each month. Breast awareness, which has now replaced BSE, is about becoming familiar with the breasts and the way they change throughout a woman's life. It is a concept that encourages women to know how their breasts look and feel normally so that they gain confidence about noticing any change which might help detect breast cancer early. Here is the 5-point code: know what is normal for you; know what changes to look and feel for; note the look and feel; report any changes to your doctor without delay; have a screening mammogram (X-ray of the breast) every year if you are 40 and over.

MYTH A mammography is a radiation hazard

FACT A mammography involves a tiny dose of radiation. The health risk is insignificant. The radiation dose is the same as a dental X-ray. The full-field digital mammography has revolutionized early detection. Its advantages: superior accuracy, and less radiation and discomfort.


MYTH A faulty gene is what causes breast cancer

FACT Only 5-10% of breast cancers are likely to carry faulty gene/s (BRCA1 & BRCA2).

Those with the genes have a significant lifetime risk of getting the disease. Not everyone who has BRCA gets breast cancer. So consider the test only if there is a significant family history. If the blood test is positive, the lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer is high (50-85% for breast cancer and 15-45% for ovarian cancer). You are in the high-risk group if one or more close relatives has had breast cancer before the age of 40; two or more close

relatives have had breast cancer at any age; close relatives who have had ovarian cancer; one close relative who has had breast cancer in both breasts (bilateral) or who has had breast and ovarian cancer; a male relative who's had breast cancer (yes, men get it too). Genetic counselling is a must before getting a genetic test.


MYTH Surgery is the only option if I am at high risk.

FACT Although surgery by way of removal of both breasts (bilateral mastectomy) and ovaries and fallopian tubes (bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy) before natural menopause, has shown to reduce the risk of both breast and ovarian cancers, there are other well-established non-surgical options. These include taking a drug, Tamoxifen, for 5 years along with close monitoring. The latter is done through a combination of MRIs of the breasts and bilateral mammograms alternating every 6 months from the age of 25 or 10 years earlier than the age at which the cancer was diagnosed in the youngest member of the family. 



The full field digital mammography helps catch a cancer at the earliest stages, especially in young women with dense breasts.

DR P RAGHU RAM is MS, FRCS (Edin), FRCS (Eng), FRCS (Glasg), FRCS (Irel), FACS (USA). He is a Padma Shri awardee, and president of The Association of Breast Surgeons of India.

 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



Answers • Dr Issac Mathai | The Integrative MD



What is a natural way to boost energy and immunity after breast-cancer treatment?

Sunidhi, 47
NASHIK


The mental and emotional trauma caused by the diagnosis, topped with the physical trauma of surgery, can cause havoc in the body, the worst affected being the immune system. A person is then prone to all sorts of infections that contribute to the depletion of energy.

A healthy lifestyle can keep the immune system in good health, thereby boosting one's positive energy. One must try and interact with people who have a positive attitude and outlook to life, as negative vibes can pull down a person's energy.


Food should be wholesome and nutritious, and include all food groups. Organically-grown food

helps steer clear of the ill-effects of pesticides. It's best to avoid packaged food, artificial colours, and flavours. Water should be from a hygienic and healthy source.

Exercising ensures regular production of the blood cells responsible for immunity. Simple, healthy forms like yoga, walking, and swimming daily are good. It also helps reduce stress — an excess of which forces the body to over produce adrenaline. This has a suppressing action on the immune system. Deep breathing, pranayam, yoga nidra, reading, being in nature, listening to music, or looking at art all help to de-stress. Then there's sleep. It is during sleep that repair of cells and tissues takes place, so not getting enough could result in dropping immunity.

Some natural immunity boosters are amla (Indian gooseberry), lemon, tulsi, neem, pepper, ginger, turmeric, nuts, and honey. Ayurvedic herbs like amrutha and aswagandha help. Your homeopathic doctor may prescribe remedies like china, ars alb, bacillinum, and sulphur depending on the condition. Post surgery, consider a holistic detox programme at a centre for at least 3 weeks. 

DR ISSAC MATHAI, MD, SOUKYA &
Prevention's alternative medicine expert.

 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



What OTC options do I have for reducing the appearance of scars?

Spriha, 43
DISPUR, ASSAM

All scars have 2 components: pigmentation and the actual scar, which could be depressed, raised, flat, or level with the skin that surrounds it.

Begin by treating the pigmentation. Don't skimp on sunscreen (use SPF 40 daily, reapplying it every 2 hours). Invest in skin-lightening products. You can choose from:

■ **Cosmetic-grade** options with actives like niacinamide, tetrahydrocurcumin, arbutin, butyl resorcinol, n-Acetyl glucosamine, vitamin C, retinoids, vitamin E, pine bark, liquorice extract or frankincense. Try: Melaclear or Bioderma White Objective serum.

■ **Medical-grade** options with actives like hydroquinone and/or kojic acid in 2% strength. Try: Depiwhite cream or Kojiglow Forte. Use these sparingly at night on greyish-black scars for no more than a month, under the guidance of your dermatologist. (Stop application if you experience burning, itching, peeling of skin or redness; or if it dries up your skin). Or you could use a formula with 8-10% glycolic acid, like Glyaha-Koj lotion or Glyco 6, at night.

Next, try the following for the scar:

■ **OTC creams** like Mederma, Cicatrix or Contractubex. These are mild formulations with actives like peptides and allantoin; stop application if you see no results for 2 months.

■ **Silicon gels** like Hexilak or Kelo-cote Advanced Formula Scar Gel. Apply these twice daily. You can also try a silicone sheet like Cica-Care which is far more effective, though not as easily available. It sticks to the skin for 5-7 days, after which it falls off.

If all these measures don't show any results in about 2 months; or if the scar has been there for longer, consult a dermatologist about using isotretinoin topically as well as in-office procedures. ■

DR REKHA SHETH is a leading cosmetic dermatologist in Mumbai. She is founder-president, Cosmetology Society of India and runs Yuva, a successful chain of skin clinics.

📧 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



A friend has been diagnosed with breast cancer, and I'm not sure how I should react. Is there anything to bear in mind?

Saleema Khan, 34
DELHI

In our lifetime, each of us will have at least one loved come face to face with cancer. If you are unsure of what to do or are worried about saying the wrong thing you're not alone. My insights are based on my professional experience as a counsellor as well as the voices of two of my closest girlfriends who fought breast cancer.

■ **When she has just got diagnosed.** At the initial stages your friend is dealing with the news herself. She may not want to talk about it. Don't run in to hug her, share stories of your aunt who had breast cancer, the sure cure of the 'organic' diet, or avoid her due to your own sense of discomfort. If you feel awkward, it is better to be

upfront and share that while you do not know what to say, you deeply care about what is happening to her and are there for her. Do be sensitive and don't let your curiosity take over. My friend shared that "90% of the people who called or came by wanted to find out which of my breasts had the cancer. I always wondered what difference it made to them!"

Depending on the personality and life situation, your friend could get angry and bitter when initially diagnosed. You could become a target of this negative energy. It's not personal. This is not about you. Know that she is going through a life-altering situation; she may be in physical pain, and be very confused with all the treatment options. Be patient and non-judgemental. Give her time, all the while letting her know that you are with her.

■ **When she does not want to talk about it.** As her cancer progresses and she is getting treatment, you may sense that she does not want to talk about how she is doing. This could be because she is looking to you to 'normalize' her life. She might rather reminisce down memory lane, as you share a few laughs about your college days, gossiping about others or just doing a fun lunch together. My friend would often share with me that she hated it when people would come to visit her with a sombre face, like it was a funeral service! Remember, your friend is more than just a 'cancer patient'.



Being a good friend means reminding her of that too.

■ **When she has lost her hair, put on weight and has a mastectomy.** Losing one's hair and putting on weight is a harsh reality of the treatment. They are everyday reminders of cancer. Everyone copes in different ways; some may be more affected than others. If you sense that your friend is upset, do acknowledge her loss so she feels heard. Avoid trivializing it by saying it does not matter, that her hair will grow back or even who cares how fat she looks.

Your friend might intellectually know that undergoing a mastectomy

is the right thing to do, however this is still emotionally a hard choice to make. 'Losing' her breast could adversely affect her body image, sex drive, and confidence. Acknowledge this with her, be a sounding board for

her fears, and go shopping with her to get post-mastectomy bras! The bottom line

is there is no 'one size fits all' approach; the best starting point is to start from where your friend is. If she has included you in this tumultuous part of her life journey, it is your privilege to be there for her.

My friend aptly put it, 'I just want you to be real with me and let me be real with you'. 📌

'90% of the people who called or came by wanted to find out which of my breasts had the cancer. I always wondered what difference it made to them!'

APARNA SAMUEL BALASUNDARAM is a psychotherapist and relationship coach. She is the founder of Life Skills Experts and A Flourishing Me, services that aim to empower women.

📧 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



**My child is not outgoing.
Should I let her be or
encourage socialization?**

Veena, 36
DELHI

From the time I was little I preferred being on my own—reading or listening to music to going out and socializing. People around me, including my parents, struggled to understand me and there was always a sense of tension and dissatisfaction at my being so asocial. As I grew up, in my attempt to fit in to what was expected of me I became a "pseudo-extrovert." I pretended to be outgoing and social where all I wanted was to find a corner and read a book. It took a long time for me to be able to say to myself and my loved ones, "I am fine the way I am."

It is tough if you are an introvert in this world. As a society we value and find worth in a narrow range of personality style. We all want our

children to be outgoing, bold, sociable, exuberant, and confident. In one word—extroverted. I see so many parents who complain about their children as being "shy", "quiet", "not outgoing" and despair at the burden they are imposing on their children at such an early age of being "not good enough."

Susan Cain in her book *Quiet, The Power of Introverts In A World That Can't Stop Talking* highlights research that indicates that there is a tendency for us to admire the Extrovert Ideal. The study highlighted how people who speak with higher velocity and volubility (typical extrovert) were rated as smarter compared to those who spoke less or more slowly.

Schools are perfect examples of this bias. Children who shine on stage or in student councils are generally hard core extroverts. Introverted children are generally hauled up for not raising their hands, "speaking up" or "being bold" enough. Sufficient to make them shrink into the wallpaper even more.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS PARENTS?

■ **Accept:** Introverts end up carrying a sense of guilt and anxiety at not being good enough. It is tough to go against society's ideal of what makes a smart child. A child who gets that from home will grow up with the feeling: "I am different from the others but I am fine." She will be in a much better position to explore her strengths rather than wasting her time pretending to be who she is not.



■ **Balance:** Being a true-blue introvert I must admit that we introverts have a tendency to stick to our comfort zone and are averse to stretching ourselves socially. Try to gently nudge your child towards being a little more adventurous. Talk to her and help her understand that having "people skills" is also a life skill which she will need. Work towards a mutual agreement, where she could do perhaps one thing every week/fortnight/month that helps her build her social confidence. It could range from attending a birthday party, doing a show-and-tell, speaking at the assembly or performing at a family get-together. As long as your

child is feeling accepted and she has a sense of ownership of what she needs to do she will be learning an important life lesson.

■ **Celebrate:** Can you imagine what our world would have been without people like Satyajit Ray, Munshi

Premchand, J K Rowling and Spielberg? Introverts are

the thinkers, listeners, poets, writers, creators who love dwelling in their rich inner life. Known for being highly sensitive, they feel the world much more strongly than extroverts do. So go ahead and

celebrate your child. She might not be the star of the party but her sparkling mind can shine like none other if given the space to just be. 📖

Susan Cain in her book *Quiet, The Power of Introverts In A World That Can't Stop Talking* says that there is a tendency for us to admire the Extrovert Ideal.

DR SHELJA SEN is a clinical psychologist, family therapist, and trainer with Children First, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Institute, Delhi.

📧 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com



Answers • Neelanjana Singh | Guest Column



Is there such a thing as an anti-cancer diet?

Niharika Patel, 45
DELHI

Here's some news that may be heartening for those with a family history of breast cancer. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that appropriate lifestyle modifications can significantly reduce the risk of this disease even in women genetically predisposed to breast cancer. The least expensive yet most powerful weapon in the preventive strategy is the food on your plate.

TRUST PLANTS AND DAIRY

The general dictum is that a diet rich in plant foods has immense cancer-warding power. Besides the several compounds present in fruits and vegetables that reduce the risk, it is the fibre present in them that lowers the oestrogen levels in the body (low oestrogen means low risk). Women

who consume adequate low-fat dairy also seem to be better protected, probably because of the high calcium available through this food group. Also, a high-fibre plant-based diet prevents obesity, and maintaining a healthy weight is a well-established aspect of breast cancer prevention in post-menopausal women. Check the following list of specific food groups that have cancer-fighting properties.

CRUCIFEROUS CURES

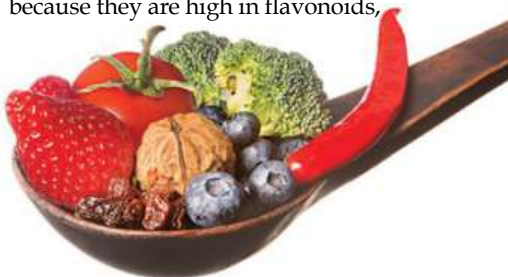
Broccoli and other vegetables from the cruciferous family such as cauliflower and cabbage (all colours) contain phytochemicals (glucosinolates), which produce a protective enzyme that may prevent the formation of cancer cells in the body. Eat them raw or lightly steamed for maximum benefits.

GARLIC GOODNESS

What works are garlic cloves and not the supplements sold in health stores. For best results, chop cloves and let sit for 15 minutes before cooking or eating as this waiting period allows for the activation of beneficial enzymes present in this superfood.

BERRY POWERS

Include all kinds of berries in your diet because they are high in flavonoids,



known for their anti-cancer properties. Eat strawberries and other local berries like mulberries and jamun. The cancer-fighting compound, carotenoids, found in tomatoes and pomegranate (they too are berries) make them potent warriors; eat them raw.

TEA RULES


Tea lovers will love this piece of news: all 3 kinds of tea — black, green, and oolong, are good sources of flavonoids. A study conducted on 3,000 post-menopausal women indicates that flavonoids from tea protected them against breast cancer. However, this protection does not work for pre-menopausal women.

SPICES SPEAK

A recent study in the *British Medical Journal* brings our attention to the

Steer clear of a diet high on red meat, processed foods and saturated/trans-fats. Foods made with maida may lead to weight gain. Also, exercise moderation with alcohol.

power of spices that may help reduce the risk of death from cancers. All

the spices stacked in your kitchen have beneficial properties. But the spice that is leading the crusade against cancer is turmeric, which has shown promise even against the most drug-resistant forms of breast cancer. 

Is soya bad news for breast cancer?

Women are wary of soya and flaxseeds as they contain high levels of phytoestrogens (substances found in plant foods that act like the hormone oestrogen). Both soya and its by-products (soya milk, tofu, edamame, soya nuts) and flaxseeds rank very high in the phytoestrogen content of

foods. But recent studies have given them a clean chit, almost. The advisory for those with a diagnosis of breast cancer is to take limited portions: 1-2 tablespoons of flaxseeds and not more than 2 servings of soya in a day. One serving of soya translates into 250 ml soya milk, 125 g tofu or ¼ c of soya nuts.

NEELANJANA SINGH is a nutrition therapist at PSRI Hospital, President of Indian Dietetics Association, Delhi Chapter, Delhi, and author of *Our Kid Eats Everything*.

🐭 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com





I'm considering rekindling my childhood love for cycling. Can I get a good workout from it?

Tanya Kapoor, 39
NEW DELHI

Qutdoor cycling will give you a great cardiovascular workout, so it brings with it the benefits of fat loss and weight control, keeping your heart healthy and driving up metabolism. It improves balance and kinesthetic awareness too.

Cycling is great if you cannot do impact-bearing activity like running. It's also good for people with arthritis, as it doesn't have an adverse effect on the joints—just make sure you're not riding hills. **Go easy** (start with 45 minutes) and gradually build up distance and time, focussing on one at a time. Keep hydrated—fit a bottle stand on the bike, and sip frequently.


Keep your injury risk to a minimum

with a good warm-up followed by some stretching to cool down. Warm up the lower back by standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, placing your palms on your thighs and rounding your back and relaxing it—just like the yoga cat stretch. To stretch the hands, open the fingers as wide as you can and clench your fist 8 times. Then perform wrist, shoulder and hip rotations.


Stretching is a must after the workout, as your spine will be in a flexed position for a long time. So do extend the spine and expand the chest. Then do the following stretches. Finish with shoulder rotations and arm stretches.

Quads: Stand with your feet together, bend one knee and holding the ankle pull it towards your hip. Keep your knees in line and your hips aligned. Hold for 20 seconds.

Hamstrings: Extend one leg and place it on a bench. Keep the knee straight and the heel flexed with the toes turned towards you. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Calves: Stand on a sidewalk or a step in such a way that only the balls of your feet are in contact with it. Let your heels reach for the ground. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat on the other side. 

NISHA VARMA is a Reebok Master Trainer based in Pune.

 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

Sensitive Teeth

PROBLEM SOLVED!

BY RICHARD LALIBERTE

The saying is true: over time, we literally get long in the tooth. As our gums recede, our nerves become more vulnerable to pain. Reverse your sensitivity with these 10 tips.

DIET TWEAKS • • •

It's all about acid.

If cutting down on acidic foods like citrus fruits feels extreme, rinse your mouth with water after eating them to wash the acid away—but wait 30 minutes to brush, or you'll drive lingering acid deeper into teeth.

Start Here!

Water

Dry mouth is a tooth-pain culprit. Saliva helps neutralize acids in the mouth that can erode enamel, leading to tooth sensitivity. Good ol' H₂O is a legit fix for parched oral conditions (which are common in people who take medications such as anti-depressants and blood pressure drugs).

Answers • Sensitive Teeth

SUGAR-FREE GUM Gets juices flowing.

Chewing increases acid-neutralizing saliva. But steer clear of sugary gum, which feeds acid-secreting bacteria and irritates sensitive teeth.

**Still
dry?**

Try a special
rinse: Biotene
Dry Mouth
Oral Rinse or
ACT Total
Care Dry
Mouth.

SENSITIVITY TOOTHPASTE

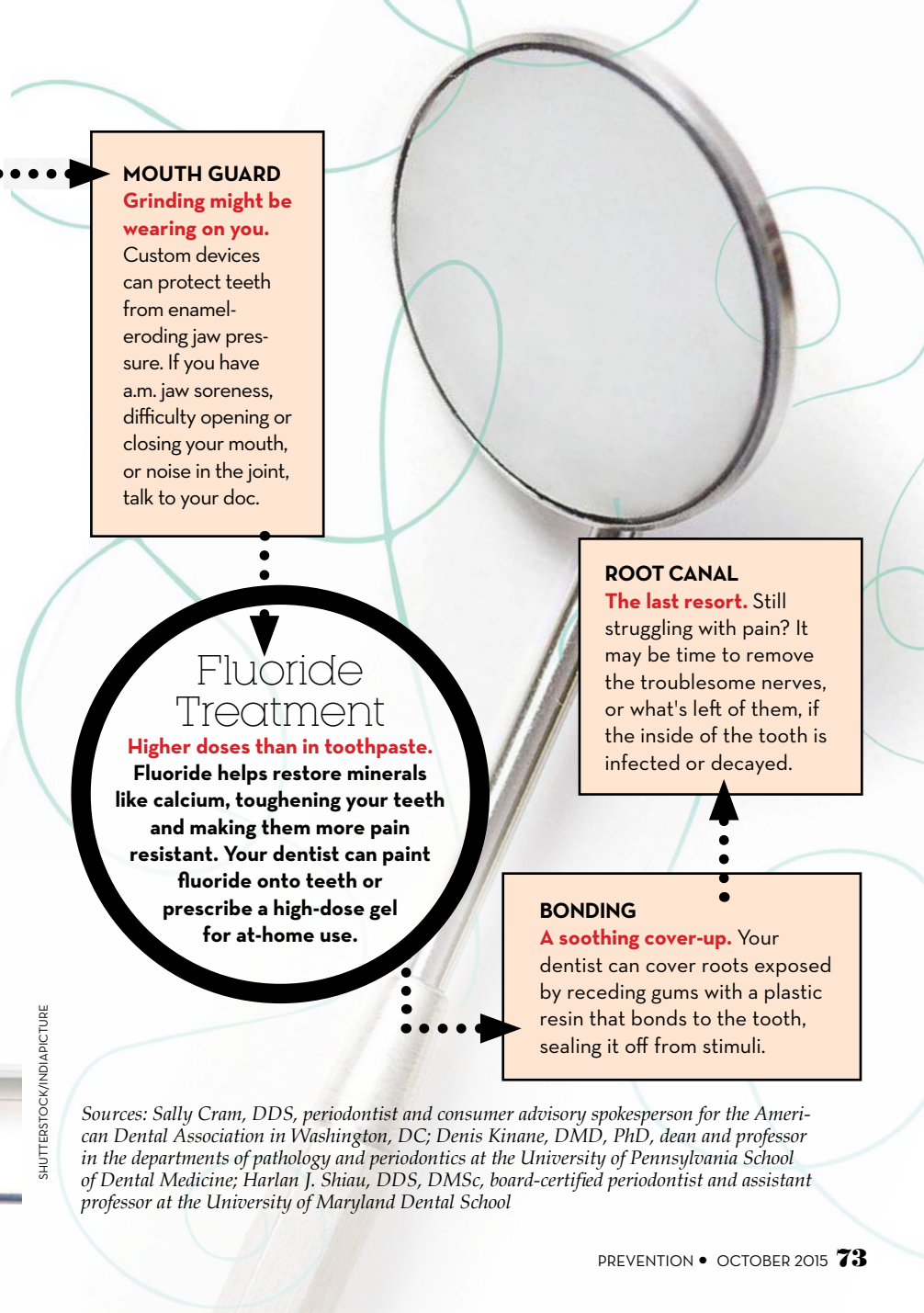
Tackles pain points.

Active ingredients like potassium nitrate block tiny channels that transmit nerve-zapping stimuli deep into teeth.

Soft Toothbrush

A gentle touch goes a long way. Stiff bristles and hard brushing can wear away enamel and speed gum recession. The technique to try: direct soft bristles toward gums at a 45-degree angle and use small, circular strokes.

DEBBI SMIRNOFF/GETTY IMAGES



MOUTH GUARD

Grinding might be wearing on you.

Custom devices can protect teeth from enamel-eroding jaw pressure. If you have a.m. jaw soreness, difficulty opening or closing your mouth, or noise in the joint, talk to your doc.

Fluoride Treatment

Higher doses than in toothpaste.

Fluoride helps restore minerals like calcium, toughening your teeth and making them more pain resistant. Your dentist can paint fluoride onto teeth or prescribe a high-dose gel for at-home use.

ROOT CANAL

The last resort. Still struggling with pain? It may be time to remove the troublesome nerves, or what's left of them, if the inside of the tooth is infected or decayed.


BONDING

A soothing cover-up. Your dentist can cover roots exposed by receding gums with a plastic resin that bonds to the tooth, sealing it off from stimuli.

Sources: Sally Cram, DDS, periodontist and consumer advisory spokesperson for the American Dental Association in Washington, DC; Denis Kinane, DMD, PhD, dean and professor in the departments of pathology and periodontics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine; Harlan J. Shiau, DDS, DMSc, board-certified periodontist and assistant professor at the University of Maryland Dental School



Turn Off **Your** Weight-Gain **Hormones**



To be slim for good, theorizes Harvard doc Sara Gottfried, you need to master what's going on undercover, inside your blood and your brain.

BY SARA GOTTFRIED

HERE'S A MIND-BENDER:

Being overweight often has nothing to do with calories or exercise. For a huge number of us, the problem is instead about misfiring hormones. Research is still catching up with this paradigm shift, which has yet to be comprehensively studied. But seeing how this revelation has helped my patients (and me) slim down and feel better gives me confidence that it's true for most women who are trying to lose weight and can't. You already know about some weight-affecting hormone issues, like thyroid and insulin imbalances. But other, more subtle ones could also be keeping you from the body you want. Biology class, anyone?



Leptin says,
'Darling, put
down that
fork, now!'



TOO MUCH **LEPTIN** SWELLS YOUR APPETITE

I think of leptin as the hormone that says, "Darling, put down the fork." Under normal circumstances, it's released from your fat cells, and travels in the blood to your brain, where it signals that you're full. But leptin's noble cause has been impeded by our consumption of a type of sugar called fructose, found in fruit and processed foods alike. When you eat small amounts of fructose, you're OK. But if you eat more than the

recommended 5 daily servings of fruit (which in recent decades has been bred to contain more fructose than it used to) plus processed foods with added sugar, your liver can't deal with the fructose fast enough to use it as fuel. Instead, your body starts converting it into fats, sending them off into the bloodstream as triglycerides and depositing them in the liver and elsewhere in your belly. As more fructose is converted to fat, your levels of leptin increase (because fat produces leptin). And when you have too much of any

hormone circulating in your system, your body becomes resistant to its message. With leptin, that means your brain starts to miss the signal that you're full. You continue to eat, and you keep gaining weight.



OVERABUNDANT **CORTISOL** PACKS ON KILOS

The so-called stress hormone cortisol can create all kinds of trouble for women who want to shed weight. When cortisol rises, it encourages the conversion of blood sugar into fat for long-term storage. Hoarding body fat in this way was a useful survival adaptation for our ancestors when they faced stressful famines. Not so much today. Obviously, reducing stress in your life will help rein in this fat-storing hormone, but there's another very common source of the problem: daily coffee, which elevates cortisol dramatically, causing your body to hoard fat when you least need to.



OUT-OF-WHACK **OESTROGEN** EXPANDS YOUR FAT CELLS

Although oestrogen is responsible for making women uniquely women, it's also the hormone that can be the most troublesome in the fat department. At normal levels, oestrogen actually

SO WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT ALL THIS?

Yes, there are myriad ways our hormones can go haywire—more than just the four listed here, says Gottfried. But hormone receptors are remarkably resilient: give them 72 hours of rest, she says, and they'll reset so that your body can better manage its chemical traffic. The resets you'll find in Gottfried's *The Hormone Reset Diet* (₹858; [Amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in)) focus on limiting meat, sugar, fruit, caffeine, grains, dairy, and toxins.

helps keep you lean by goosing the production of insulin, a hormone that manages blood sugar. When

Of course
you need to cut
stress with yoga
and meditation,
but you also need
to cut coffee
intake.

oestrogen gets thrown off, though, it turns you into a weight-gain machine.

Here's how: when you eat, your blood sugar rises.

Like a bodyguard, insulin lowers it by escorting glucose

into 3 different places in your body. When insulin is in good working form—not too high and not too low—it sends a small amount of glucose to your liver, a large amount to your muscles to use as fuel, and little to none to fat storage. When you're healthy and in good shape, your pancreas produces exactly the right amount of insulin to have your blood sugar softly rise and fall within a narrow range (fasting levels of 70 to

100 mg/dl). But when your oestrogen levels climb, the cells that produce insulin become strained, and you can become insulin resistant. That's when insulin starts to usher less glucose to the liver and muscles, raising the levels of sugar in your bloodstream and ultimately storing the glucose as fat. Your fat tissue can expand by as much as 4 times to accommodate the storage of glucose.

How do oestrogen levels climb? Meat is one of the primary reasons. You take in a lot less fibre when you eat meat; research suggests that vegetarians get more than twice as much fibre as omnivores. Because fibre helps us stay regular, and we process excess oestrogen through our waste, eating less fibre drives up our oestrogen. Meat also contains a type of fat with its own oestrogen problem. Today, farm animals are overloaded with steroids, antibiotics, and toxins from their feed and the way they've been raised. When you eat them, those substances are released into your system. They can behave like oestrogen in the body, adding to your overload.



BELEAGUERED **TESTOSTERONE** SLOWS YOUR METABOLISM

You are confronted with an astounding number of toxins each day, including pesticides, herbicides, genetically-modified

Pesticides and other toxins are the reason girls are entering puberty early.



foods, and about 6 different synthetic hormones in meat. Toxins are lurking in face creams, prescription drugs, processed foods, your lipstick, the linings of tuna fish cans, and even the air you breathe. The list goes on.

Many types of these toxins, such as pesticides, plastics, and industrial chemicals, behave like oestrogen when absorbed in the body. Experts believe that our increasing exposure to toxins helps explain why so many girls are entering puberty earlier and



vital for hormone balance—and contributes to oestrogen overload. Testosterone contributes to muscle growth, which in turn supports metabolism. And, as we already know, oestrogen overload raises insulin insensitivity. The combination adds kilos to your frame: a study from Sweden published in the journal *Chemosphere* showed that exposure to a particular type of pesticide called organochloride was linked to a weight gain of 4.3 kilos (9½ pounds) over 50 years.

And that's just one type of toxin. Your risk of weight gain and disease from exposure to toxins may be greater than you realize. A survey by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention demonstrated that 93% of the population has measurable levels of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical found in store receipts and canned foods that disrupts oestrogen, thyroid, and androgen hormones. Endocrine disruptors interfere with the production,

transportation, and metabolism of most hormones.

Now you know the "whys" of your broken metabolism, the reasons regular diets don't address the root cause of your weight gain.

Hormones dictate what your body does with all the food you eat. Fix your hormones and your body will slim down without any extraordinary effort from you. 12

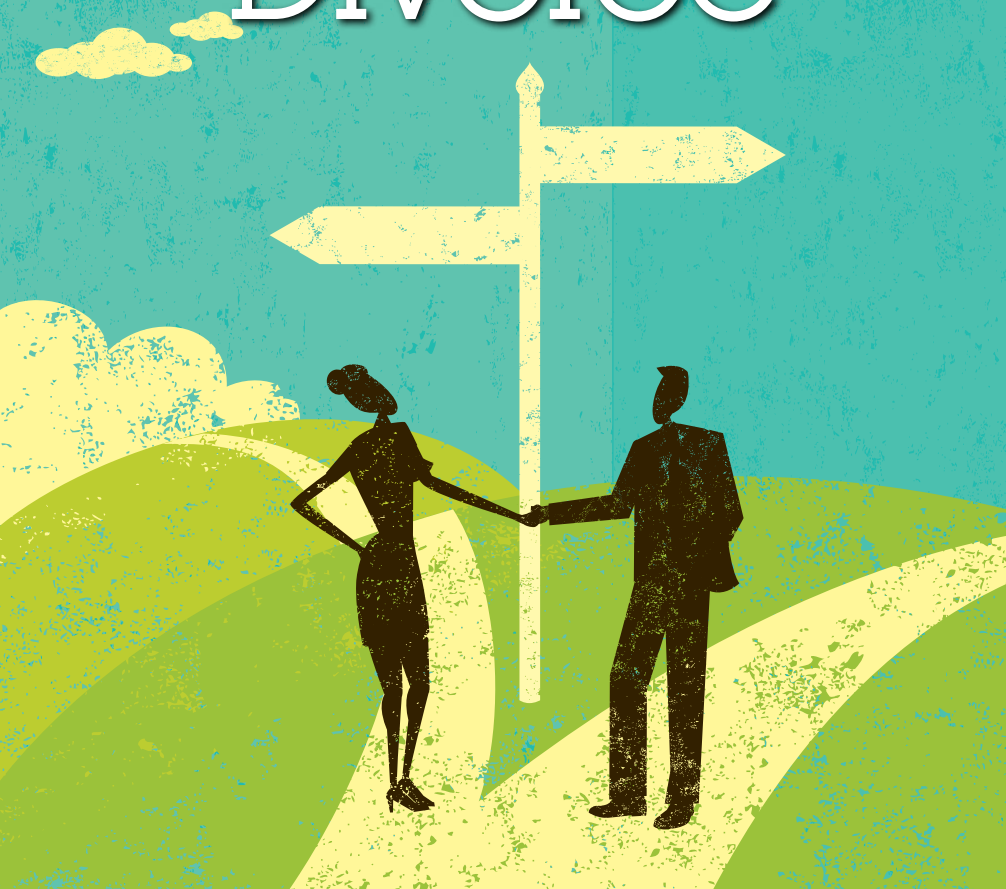
earlier, and why many boys exhibit feminine characteristics such as developing breasts. Xenooestrogens, as these particular toxins are called, have been associated with an elevated risk of oestrogen-driven diseases like breast and ovarian cancers and endometriosis.


All this fake oestrogen overwhelms your body's testosterone—which is

Many types of toxins behave like oestrogen when absorbed in the body, and this suppresses testosterone, the hormone that builds metabolism.

In Focus • **Health**

The Silver Anniversary Divorce





As a nation, we're not too hot on the whole notion of expressing emotional intimacy and connectedness when it comes to marriage. In the absence of expressed love and experienced companionship in a marriage, it can be an extremely uphill battle, particularly when either or both partners doesn't have the heart to try any more. Then, divorce can really be either a breakdown or a breakthrough, says **Dr Vijay Nagaswami**.

Just a few weeks after their youngest son had got a dream job in Singapore and left home, Ramila and Samant, who were married for 26 years and had 3 children, all of whom were well settled in their careers, had a chat over their morning cup of tea. She asked him whether it wasn't time for them to go their separate ways and get a divorce. Samant was silent for a while. This was the best news he'd heard in a long time but he didn't want to sound too upbeat about it. As usual, Ramila had put his thoughts into words. When he agreed with her, he tried to keep his voice as neutral as possible, but Ramila had caught the underlying joy that he felt. She felt it too. Although, in her case, there was more relief than joy. She was relieved that Samant wasn't going to create a scene, which she was quite certain he wouldn't, but one could never tell! She was also happy that, now that the children were settled, they didn't have to keep up the happy-family charade anymore.

Research Says...

A study from Pennsylvania State University by Paul Amato and Bryndl Hohmann-Marriott found that couples whose marriages are characterized by high levels of distress (conflict, unfulfilled expectations, etc.) run as high a risk of divorce as those characterized by low levels of distress (on account of lower engagement between partners). However, positive comments and communication protected both groups from divorce.

Washington-based John Gottman's principal contributions to the issue of divorce prediction is what he refers to as the 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse'. Gottman believes that if 4 elements (the metaphorical horsemen)—criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling—were consistently present in a marriage, it could be predictive of a potential divorce. Of course, he has developed interventions to counter the harmful effects of these 'horsemen'.

WHY NOW?

Their marriage had died over 10 years ago. Nothing dramatic had happened. No infidelity. No violent dramas. It just quietly died, and neither had the energy to resuscitate it. They hadn't made love in over 12 years. Their conversations were restricted to essentials over the last 10 years. And they had recently taken to pursuing their respective interests without demanding each other's participation in these. They hadn't wanted to upset the children's apple cart, and so they'd hung in there, although the children had been exhorting them for a while to move on. They had no arguments about the settlement, and within a couple of weeks, Samant moved out and in a year's time, they were divorced on grounds of mutual consent.

You might well ask, and many people in their social environment did, if they'd been chugging along for almost 10 years and living more like room-mates than as a married couple, why get divorced now? Usually, people get divorced to get married again or because they can't stand the toxicity in their marriage or they have other plans—but neither Samant nor Ramila had anything of the sort. So, why get divorced?

AND THE POINT IS?

This is the thing we need to get our heads around. People get divorced not just because they hate each

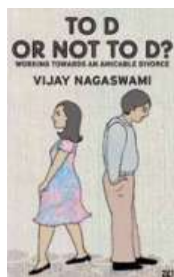


other or are angry with each other, but also because they don't see the meaning of being in a 'non-marriage' and performing even the basic roles of husband and wife. They might never get married again. They might never have relationships with anyone else. They might never do anything dramatic with their lives. But whatever they do, they'd like to do so by themselves, when they want to do it, and at their own pace. I find an increase in the number of silver anniversary divorces over the last decade. Of course, many couples don't actually wait for 25 years to take the decision; many of them do so much earlier, but only when both are sure that their divorce is not going to have an adverse impact on their children.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY?

In this sense, it's a responsible thing to do, for the last thing they want to

do when the kids are going through their formative years is to give them one more complexity to deal with. However, children tend to mature much younger nowadays, and they don't see divorce as an 'uncool' thing anymore, as long as they are not asked to take sides. So, when the bond has gone out of the marriage, many couples do take a mutually acceptable decision to move on. One way to look at it is that they initially saw marriage as a sacrament and were committed to playing their marital roles, but as they grew older and wiser, they started seeing it as a relationship that could be sustained only if it was mutually beneficial to both partners. But their family members who, to this day, remain shocked by what Ramila and Samant did, obviously don't place any great premium on the central roles played by intimacy and bondedness in a marriage. The moral of the story? Divorces need not always be breakdowns, sometimes they can also be breakthroughs. **■**



Excerpted and adapted from
To D Or Not To D?
Working Towards
An Amicable
Divorce, by
Dr Vijay Nagaswami,
published by Westland
Books. This is the
fourth in his successful
series of books on
marriage and
relationships.
He is also a
Prevention advisor.

Better Than Ever

"How Do You Recover?"

Life after a stroke is often never the same again, but **Sharad Kumar** says he is blessed with another chance at appreciating and valuing the things he took for granted earlier.

I was a regular person, with a job, a family, a life. I took these for granted, but I took health seriously, exercising and eating right. Life though, doesn't often go according to plan—not my plan, at least.

THE STROKE

That Wednesday morning lacked the usual hectic routine since my boss was on holiday. I got ready and left the house to board a bus. I was on the mobile phone for the hour-and-a-half long journey to Whitefield convention centre, in Bengaluru. There, I met a good friend and chatted with him, then spoke to my boss on the phone. These are mundane occurrences, but you don't realize how special each moment is until you lose your ability to function like you are used to. At the convention centre, as I walked around

the stalls, I suddenly experienced speechlessness. My wife called and I was forced to cut her calls. I tried to tell the person at a counter something, but words failed me. I did not think that I was having a stroke. Instead, I thought there was a problem with my voice box. Every other part of my body was functioning, but I decided to go home and got in a bus. My wife called again and I gave the phone to the conductor. She, unlike me, had an idea about what was happening. The bus driver drove over footpaths and he sped past bus stands. All the while, I was bleeding internally and about 2 hours passed. There was someone who seemed unusually dressed in white sitting next to me, who helped me communicate with my wife. Was he just a traveller, or was he an angel? I'll never know.



THE AFTERMATH

Even as I was being wheeled into the hospital, I was an unlikely patient, because I looked 'normal'. But then, blackness, a fog. When it cleared, I saw myself in a hospital gown in a room with stark-white walls. My bed was raised and a pillow angled at my neck made my head throb. I was shown a hospital chart with big letters and signs. I couldn't read; I struggled and choked. The words were a jumbled mess. My brain refused to help. My eyes blurred with the effort of concentration.

I had every possible test over the next 12 days in hospital. Four days in the ICU after brain surgery, and another 6 on the neurological floor didn't yield many answers. I only knew it was a hemorrhagic stroke, with blood vessels that had burst, forming a pool of blood that spanned the right top of my head from front to back. Statistics say that 37.5% of hemorrhagic strokes result in death within 30 days, compared to 7.6% of ischemic stroke. Not great news for a 45-year old, previously healthy Karate black belt, who swam 45 laps of a pool daily.

THE MONTHS AHEAD

For several months after the surgery, I was banned from using a mobile phone. Gradually, the ban lifted and I began answering the phone myself. It was very exciting to push the green button and say hello, because regaining speech meant regaining confidence. I soon began to string 4 or 5 words together, though they would sometimes stall, lose direction and sound confusing. It was an effort. I pieced together a conversation with patient friends. I celebrated my progress every day, staying focussed on how well I was doing. I shared my triumphs with my wife Archana, and my younger brother, Santosh. No matter how small the progress, I was inspired to continue.

Learning to read all over again, is by far the hardest thing I've had to do. Poornima, my taskmaster and speech therapist, coaxed me along. Although I struggled, my brain, I was told by the experts, was now a work



I knew the world was not all sunshine and rainbows. But there I was that Wednesday, believing I was invincible.

in progress — very slow progress. Not at all like the quick mind of a child seeing the world for the first time.

The right side of my body went numb because of the stroke. I could barely walk and used crutches after the surgery, afraid to take a single

step without them, certain that I would fall. Slowly, the strength returned to my right leg. After 8 months, my right hand was still useless — I could not turn the pages of my son Dev's book, nor could I grip a pencil to trace the English

alphabet in the books that Archana brought me.

The numbness sometimes yielded to a feeling of pins and needles that run furiously along the right side of my body. I trained my left hand to grip a pencil. I also trained myself to use the bathroom without assistance.

A task as simple as tying my shoe laces took me 20 minutes and there were days when I fell back in bed in exhaustion, the laces a tangled heap. Slowly, after 9 months of flexing and fixing, I regained the use of my right hand. I had trouble remembering details, struggled with numbers and could no longer multitask—an ability that I was inordinately proud of before the stroke.

THE SELF-DISCOVERY

Perhaps, I will struggle with some of these challenges all my life. Although I am thankful that the stroke has changed and not paralysed me, it has taken me a long while to accept that I am no longer the person I was. In the initial months, I sank into depression and considered ending my life, but medication and therapy pulled me

through, although I was emotionally spent. When the darkness lifted, I realised that I was lucky to be alive.

Recovery is not something you achieve on your own. Family and friends held on to the belief that I would recover completely, regardless of whether it would take a year, 3 years or a lifetime.

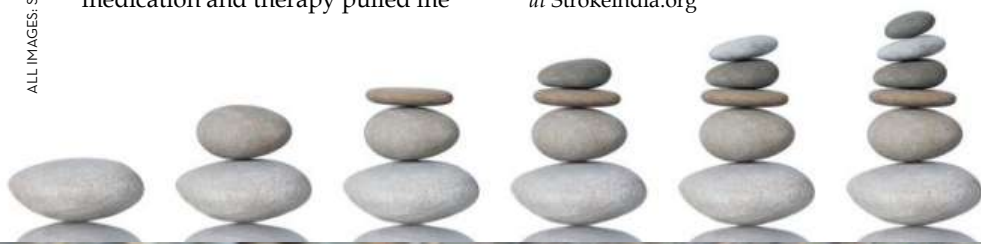
They showed me, in word and deed, that my quest to re-learn was achievable. Before, I was an independent man; now, I feel the need for support and kindness.

I have heard doctors say to stroke survivors, 'If you do not get your abilities back in about 6 months after the stroke, then you will never get them back'. Believe me, doctors can be wrong. My improvement continues 2 years after the stroke. The brain has a wonderful ability to recover lost function. Keep the faith.

To friends and families of stroke survivors I say this: keep talking and keep listening to your loved one. It aids recovery more than you can ever know. I am often asked, 'How long did it take you to recover?' My reply is always, 'From what?'. 📌

Kumar has a stroke support group at Strokeindia.org

Life as it used to be has disappeared. The challenge of adapting and reclaiming as much of that life as you can depends on your resilience.



easy energy BOOSTERS

Your poison needn't be a sugar bomb, yet it doesn't have to be plain old water. Here, healthy drinks to keep you alert and how!

BY STEPHANIE ECKELKAMP AND PALLAVI SHANKAR

if your 3 pm association is a cappuccino fix because you're ready to doze at your desk, this one's for you. Skipping your coffee routine may be the best thing you can do to focus on work as coffee instantly perks you up, but its effects may last late into the evening. It's a vicious

cycle that leads to a lack of sleep at night, leading to a late afternoon downer. But no, sugar isn't the answer either—you don't want an instant upper and a sudden crash. So turn to these healthy and nourishing drinks to help you snap out of your afternoon lethargy or better still, prevent it altogether.



1. Almond Milk + Cinnamon

You may find more use for these nutrient-filled nuts than just as filler snacks. Blend 20 soaked almonds with 1½ cups water to make a cup of almond milk. According to a study, vitamin E and magnesium found in almonds keep the brain in top form. Bolster the nutty drink's brain-boosting effects by adding a dash of cinnamon; a study found that this spice's aroma can lead to increased alertness and decreased frustration.



2. Green Tea

This ancient brew contains L-theanine, an amino acid that increases alpha brain waves (similar to what happens when you meditate), which are associated with a focused calm. Green tea also contains only 2-4% caffeine, which keeps you alert without making you hyperactive.



3. Peppermint Tea

The scent of peppermint reduces anxiety and fatigue and helps in improving focus. A study found that the tingly fresh smell of peppermint increased alertness and reduced frustration in participants engaged in prolonged driving.

4. Beetroot Juice

These root veggies are loaded with dietary nitrates that are converted into nitrites in the body, which increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain. Whip up a beet smoothie: add folate-rich spinach to improve mental clarity and carrots for sweetness as its natural sugars make you feel full without raising blood sugar levels.



THE RIGHT BREAKFAST


It's the most important meal of the day. Fibre-packed foods work; a Cardiff University study found that people who ate high-fibre cereals in the morning showed a 10% reduction in fatigue, lower incidence of depression and better cognitive skills. A mix of carbs, protein, veggies, fruits, and nuts is



good too: upma with veggies or wholewheat toast with nut butter keeps you alert.



5. Water + Lemon

Some jazzed up water may be all you need; studies have shown that dehydration can mess with memory, while other studies have found that the scent of lemon improves performance on tasks that require concentration. 


Source: Jen McDaniel, spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, US; Ritika Samaddar, dietitian, Delhi; Naini Setalvad, nutritionist, Mumbai; Neelanjana Singh, nutritionist, Delhi; Dr Isaac Mathai, founder-owner of Soukya, Bengaluru



HOW TO ^(SAFELY) EXERCISE WITH ASTHMA

Don't let wheezing slow you down. Breeze through your workout with these tips.

BY SARAH KLEIN



If you battle asthma, you know how tough it can be to get regular exercise. But new research suggests that if you approach your workouts the right way, cardio could actually ease asthma symptoms and lower the risk of suffering a full-on attack.

In a study recently published in the medical journal *Thorax*, researchers followed people with moderate to severe asthma for 3 months. Half of the patients did simple breathing exercises twice a week, while the rest followed an aerobic training programme on a treadmill twice a week. Each session was 35 min-

utes, including a 5-minute warm-up and a 5-minute cool-down.

By the end of the study, airway inflammation had dropped significantly for those in the treadmill group, while measures of their lung function (oxygen consumption and aerobic capacity) improved. For the non-exercise group, those measures did not change. Even better, people in the treadmill group had fewer incidences of asthma symptoms. "The findings suggest exercise

has an enormous potential in asthma treatment and should be complementary to medication," says study author Celso Carvalho, PT, PhD, Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the School of Medicine at the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Carvalho stresses that you should exercise under your doctor's supervision — all the patients in the study continued to use their medications. Get your doctor's advice on incorporating exercise that's appropriate for you. "If you have exercise-induced asthma, your doctor may ask you to use a reliever inhaler 10 minutes before you exercise, if you feel symptoms coming on. Do stay clear of carpeted gyms or any area that triggers an attack: a polluted road or a pollen-ridden park. Keep your inhaler handy so you can use it again during your workout if you start to notice symptoms of an attack,"

says Dr Vivek Nangia, director and head of department, pulmonology, Fortis Hospital and Fortis Escorts, Delhi.



Here are a few other tips to help avoid asthma symptoms during your workout.

➤ AIM FOR A STEADY PACE.

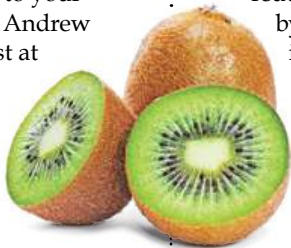
Heavy breathing can quickly turn into wheezing, coughing, and tightening of the chest; during high-intensity activity you're more likely to breathe through your mouth, which sends air directly to your lungs and airways, says Andrew Murphy, MD, an allergist at the Asthma Allergy and Sinus Center in Pennsylvania. When you breathe through your nose, air gets warmed and humidified in the nostrils.

Stick to low-intensity activities that allow you to maintain more normal breathing primarily through your nose, such as walking, hiking, and golf, Murphy says. Or if you prefer running or biking, aim for a consistent speed where it's still easy to chat

with a friend (that's a good measure your lungs are still working at an even pace). And always start slow.

➤ EAT VIT C.

A study in *Thorax* found that eating citrus or vitamin C-rich fruits like kiwi helps reduce asthma symptoms. In the study of over 18,000 children it was noticed that shortness of breath was reduced by 32%, severe wheeze by 41%, night-time coughing by 27%, chronic cough by 25%, and runny nose by 28%. So get noshing!



➤ WATCH THE WEATHER.

"Warm temperature and moist air is better suited for those with asthma," says Nangia. Cold, dry temperatures are more likely to trigger asthma flares—the lack of moisture can irritate your lungs and airways. Some people are more sensitive than others, so there's no clear threshold, Murphy says.

Track Record

GET TECHNOLOGY TO HELP YOU TRACK POLLEN AND LOCAL FORECAST. HERE ARE APPS YOU CAN TAP INTO.



MYASTHMA INDIA; *Free, Android* : Tracks weather, temperature, pollen and pollution for your local area. Also comes with an Asthma Control Test.



ASTHMAMD; FREE, *iOS* : Helps you monitor your triggers and tracks the effectiveness of your medicine. Also uses data collected to shape ongoing asthma research.



BLUEAIR; *Free, Android*: This air pollution warning app gives you real time updates from Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.




Allowing the body to gradually adjust to temperature changes can help, and covering the mouth with a mask or scarf can also help to warm and humidify air before it hits your lungs. Keep an eye out for warnings about high pollen counts and high levels of air pollution, as well, says Murphy — both can be asthma triggers (see box).

➤ **HIT THE POOL.**

Dig out those goggles and try a few laps. Studies have shown that swimming is less likely to cause attacks in people with asthma than other activities out of the pool — and any symptoms that do occur tend to be less severe. The warmth and humidity at the pool makes working out easier on the lungs and

airways, explains Murphy. Just make sure asthma is under control before jumping in, and — as with any new exercise regimen — start out slow and gradually build up intensity, he adds. One possible hitch: chlorine can be an asthma trigger for some people.

➤ **WARM UP AND COOL DOWN.**

Start with light movements to allow your airways to adjust to the higher demands, advises Murphy. Jumping into exercise too quickly could trigger asthma flares. Spend the first 5 to 10 minutes of your workout at about two-thirds of your usual pace to start and end your workout, Murphy recommends. If you find even that too much, start at one-third. 

—With inputs by Gagan Dhillon

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LIFE

HOPE



LOVE

THE WONDER OF LIFE

*Awareness is the first and most important tool to eliminate breast cancer-related mortality in India and around the world, but the **stories of these women who have looked it in the eye** are the 7 pillars that aid the cause.*

BY KALYANI PRASHER



Devieka Bhojwani >

COMMITMENT, Mumbai, 62

Sometimes it is important to underline a message that people think is too obvious to even state. "I cannot stress on this enough," says Devieka. "Breast cancer has gone unnoticed as many Indian women fail to undergo regular check-ups." For 13 years, Devieka has been fighting to correct that.

A month after her silver anniversary in 2000, Devieka discovered that she had breast cancer. Life was at a high when the discovery suddenly turned everything around. During the process of coping and cure, she met many people, learnt more about the disease and discovered the myths and misinformation

surrounding it. She was determined to do something about it on a larger scale.

"I decided to set up the Women's Cancer Initiative in 2003 in partnership with the Tata Memorial Hospital." The foundation takes care of issues related to cancer in women such as breast, cervical, and ovarian cancers. It has

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJENDRA MOHITE

EVENT WATCH

The foundation organizes the annual Breast and Gynaecological Cancer Conference, in Mumbai, with over 250 oncologists. The 13th edition is on Oct 10-11. The 4th Breast Cancer Survivors' Conference is on Oct 19-20. womens.cancer.initiative@gmail.com



undertaken initiatives to create awareness—emphasizing the importance of early detection. The foundation aids R&D, facilitates interaction between professionals, and conducts awareness drives. "Its core activities comprise financial support to socially and economically disadvantaged women who are diagnosed with breast and gynaecological cancers,"

Devieka Bhojwani with other survivors she supports

she explains. This initiative has supported hundreds of women to complete their treatment with chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, radiation, surgery, and rehab. The foundation has undertaken funding the treatment of about 350 women annually, who have over an 80% chance of a complete recovery but can't afford treatment costs.

"Cancer actually gave me a cause beyond myself; today, my life is so much richer for it."

"I believe that I must help others who faced the difficulty I did, but who need support with finance and awareness." She knows the needs of the number of afflicted women and is trying to fill that need-gap.





Neeti Chhabra & Shruti Sharma >

KINSHIP, Delhi, both 34

Shruti was just 31 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. While undergoing treatment, she met Neeti, who was the same age. "I was on my second session of chemotherapy when she was diagnosed," explains Shruti, about how the two met to work on raising cancer awareness," and our doctor suggested that

she meet me to be better prepared for what was to come."

While going through the treatment both met a lot of people who had pronounced them dying, and had no clue that this cancer was curable. Talking to a person of the same age made a difference. "Like many Indian women, I had never done a breast self-exam," says Neeti.

"Luckily I felt a lump on the surface and got diagnosed in the first stage itself." Soon they realized that not only was there severe lack of information on breast cancer but also that the apprehensions and feelings of a young breast cancer patient are very different from an older patient. "A woman who has been married and had children, or someone professionally accomplished, will not have the same worries as someone younger," Shruti explains. To fill this gap, they started a support group in Delhi's Apollo Hospital and also created a Whatsapp group which links patients and survivors.

Soon enough Neeti founded her NGO—Yes to Life—that conducts

TALK TIME

Yes to Life is a registered NGO with the vision to bring down the mortality rate arising out of breast cancer. It has 4 wings: breast cancer awareness talks; treatment support; rehabilitation support; and mobile screening. In a year since its inception, Neeti and Shruti have done several awareness talks and managed a support group of around 50 cancer survivors and patients which they met through Indraprastha Apollo Hospital. "We are both crazy and happy people," says Neeti, "and I strongly believe that we have 2 lives, and the second one starts when you realise you only have one." neeti@yes2life.in

*"It is
important is
to live while
you are alive."*

awareness talks for breast cancer in schools and colleges, provides emotional support to patients and caregivers, runs WhatsApp groups, and provides financial support to the underprivileged.

"This work gives me peace of mind and happiness," says Shruti. The realization that you can only live your life one day at a time can be liberating. Cancer gave both Shruti and Neeti a pause to figure out their priorities. "Along with a lot of other blessings that have come my way, including being stress free, being able to let go, being able to live in the moment, I found one of the bigger purposes of my life in Yes to Life," says Neeti.

Shruti Sharma and Neeti Chhabra *work to create awareness for cancer*





Tarana Khubchandani >

EMPATHY, Mumbai, 53

Passages was an NGO Tarana started in 1998 to help women through the various passages of their lives. Talking, informing, empathizing was their

way of providing the healing touch. "We did this by way of seminars, workshops, discussions, talks," explains Tarana. The topics ranged from domestic violence to parenting. A year later, life changed for Tarana and so did her work. "I was 37 and my breast cancer was at stage 2; I did not know a single survivor to discuss my fears with." Starting 1999, her personal focus moved to the cause of raising awareness on breast cancer. Tarana enlisted the help of her co-founders Kaya, Valerie and Dr Coomi. "Our efforts were in

the direction of a telephone helpline, support group, and counselling, and a book, *Whispering Hope*, that deals with aspects of the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer." This remains the focus of Passages, and Tarana helps fund it through her gallery, Art & Soul. "We adopt patients who are below the poverty line and support them through their diagnosis and treatment."

"I truly believe in the attitude of gratitude," she says, as she positively moves on to plan her next fundraising event.



NGO WATCH

Passages distributes expensive drugs such as tamoxifen and mastectomy bras to patients free of cost. Her book, *Whispering Hope* (available in many regional languages), is distributed to patients all over India. They also do awareness camps, and distribute brochures in English and Hindi.

tkhubchandani@gmail.com



Neelam Kumar >

OPTIMISM, Mumbai, 56

BOOK TALK

Neelam's book doesn't speak just to cancer patients but to anyone confronting illness, death, or betrayals of any form and living in fear and confusion. To *Cancer With Love* is a happy little book that encourages the reader to have fun even while going through the grimmest situation in life.

In a life that has seen more than its share of hardships, Neelam Kumar surprises us with her cheeriness. She has faced the challenges of widowhood, single-parenting, financial hardships, relationship breakdowns, two cancers and, quite amazingly, manages to make light of the matter by calling her life "action-filled". Neelam first developed cancer in 1996 (she was

36) in the intensely stressful time after her husband's death. She got through it with a mix of hope and despair but then it returned in 2013. "When I was going through my two cancers, I needed emotional support," she explains, "but all I got were doomsday predictions. Powerful writing in bestsellers such as *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The Last Lecture*, *Grit and Grace* did not

help. They all ended with the cancer patient dying." Neelam was determined to look for joy and hope. "I had decided to live despite cancer." Not finding a book that brought hope, she decided to write one herself, detailing all the important bits from her experience. To *Cancer With Love—My Journey of Joy* is her attempt to create a happily-ever-after book for patients.

Considering she has been through phases where friends shunned her because they thought she'd be too depressive, or worse, "infectious", Neelam's spirit is impressive. "I made a decision to write on facing cancer with humour instead of despair. I want people to read it and go 'if she could do this after 2 cancers, why can't I?' That will be my greatest satisfaction."



Renuka Prasad >

ADAPTATION, Delhi, 67

"My biggest
takeaway
from my tryst
with cancer
is that it is
curable."

PHOTOGRAPH BY AMAL MOURYA

She was leading a socially hectic life that befits a general's wife, when cancer struck. "It was Holi," Renuka recalls, "and while bathing and washing away the colour, I felt the lump. I was 49 then." It was a bolt from the blue but mercifully it was still at the first stage. Nevertheless, Renuka makes no bones about the trauma; there is no point denying the initial shock and helplessness of discovering your cancer. "It was a traumatic experience, even later, to see the scar once the stitches were removed and it took me time to come to terms with it."

Dealing with that trauma changed her life. She now had a new mission: to make people aware of an early diagnosis for survival; to help those diagnosed accept it and develop a positive approach to fight it with all their might;

and to help navigate them through the various departments for their treatment. She started raising funds for the treatment of the underprivileged. "All this became a reality for me once I joined the Indian Cancer Society, Delhi branch, on my husband's retirement from active service," she explains. "As a survivor, I joined the Emotional Support Group, Cancer Sahyog; I worked in hospitals as a volunteer."

She attended seminars within the country and abroad and brought her experience home, adapting it in the field

of patient support in India. "Seeing a large number of the patients and their families benefit through the use of complementary therapies on a trip to the UK prompted me to set up a similar centre in Delhi," she says. And Prashanti was born. Leading therapists from different disciplines give their time to Prashanti voluntarily.

Today, Prashanti is a one-stop point for all breast cancer patients, providing everything from counselling to information on diet. Her takeaway from cancer: "Life is short. Laugh and learn to forgive."

HELP AT HAND

Renuka served as president for Cancer Sahyog for 4 years. She was also secretary, Breast Cancer Care, a group that looks at the needs of mastectomy. She has been joint secretary of the Indian Cancer Society since 2002 and currently looks at events and fundraising. All these assignments are on a voluntary basis. Prashanti has 2 lymphatic-pressure machines for breast cancer with lymphodema.

Patients can access this facility free of cost at 11/70 Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar IV, Delhi; from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday-Friday.



Madhulika Sikka >

STILLNESS, US, 53

I wouldn't describe myself as someone who works for the cause of breast cancer," Madhulika says at the outset, quite disarmingly. She discovered her breast cancer when she was 48 and decided to take a reflective route to help deal with it: by writing down everything. "I started journaling during my treatment to help me sort out my own thoughts," she

explains. "My friends thought I may have a book here."

Madhulika's story stresses on something significant. While writing is an isolated, internal way of dealing with trauma, building a good support group matters. Don't try to fight cancer alone. "I was lucky to have a remarkable friend network that helped with all sorts of practical matters like food and childcare," she says. "They were incredibly supportive." But there is one more thing—it is important to say the right thing. Madhulika

continues to write editorials and essays about breast cancer but likes to stress on nuance: "I hate martial terms to describe going through treatment," she says. "It implies that if you are unfortunate enough not to have had a good outcome then it is your fault for not 'fighting' it." She doesn't believe in large epiphanies and prefers a more pragmatic approach. "Life is full of surprises that you have to handle and not all of them are pleasant," she says quite simply. "I'm not so scared of being scared anymore!"



A WORD OF ADVICE

"Don't call it a battle!" Madhulika advises, on dealing with cancer, "and if you are unfortunate enough to be diagnosed, don't be afraid of asking for help, and remember people do really want to help you." She has one piece of advice for support groups and caregivers. "When you are helping out friends who have this condition, ask them what they really need from you as opposed to assuming you know what they need."



Ritu Biyani >

ENERGY, Pune, 56

OUT THERE

High>>>Ways Infinite is a drive to empower patients, survivors, and families dealing with cancer. Their goal is to reach 3 lakh people by 2016 and provide them with education and support. You can reach out to High>>>Ways Infinite on +91-98812-32744

She refused to give into crying and pity and set about dealing with cancer with a military discipline. "Chemotherapy did come as a knock-out punch," she admits. "A person whose stamina could take her to the heights of the Himalayas had to stretch her willpower to walk a few metres."

Dealing with her own illness and reaching out to fellow survivors kick-started her journey to the project High>>>Ways in 2006 where she drove to remote areas with her daughter and held 120 cancer awareness workshops in 26 states and 4 UTs. In 2008, the drive spiralled into something bigger: High>>>Ways Infinite. It is Ritu's continuing journey in spreading awareness of cancer across the country. **12**

From childhood, Ritu was an active and energetic girl often causing her mother to stress about her breaking a leg or an arm. When later in life she got into mountaineering and adventure sports, no one was really surprised. What was truly impressive was when Ritu, a dental surgeon, became the first female paratrooper

in the Indian Army Dental Corps, where she served for 10 years. The physical and mental discipline and energy came to the fore when she had to confront breast cancer in September 2000 at the age of 40. "I had never imagined that I would need these qualities to overcome one of the biggest challenges thrown at me by life," says Ritu. "This was a different kind of adventure!"





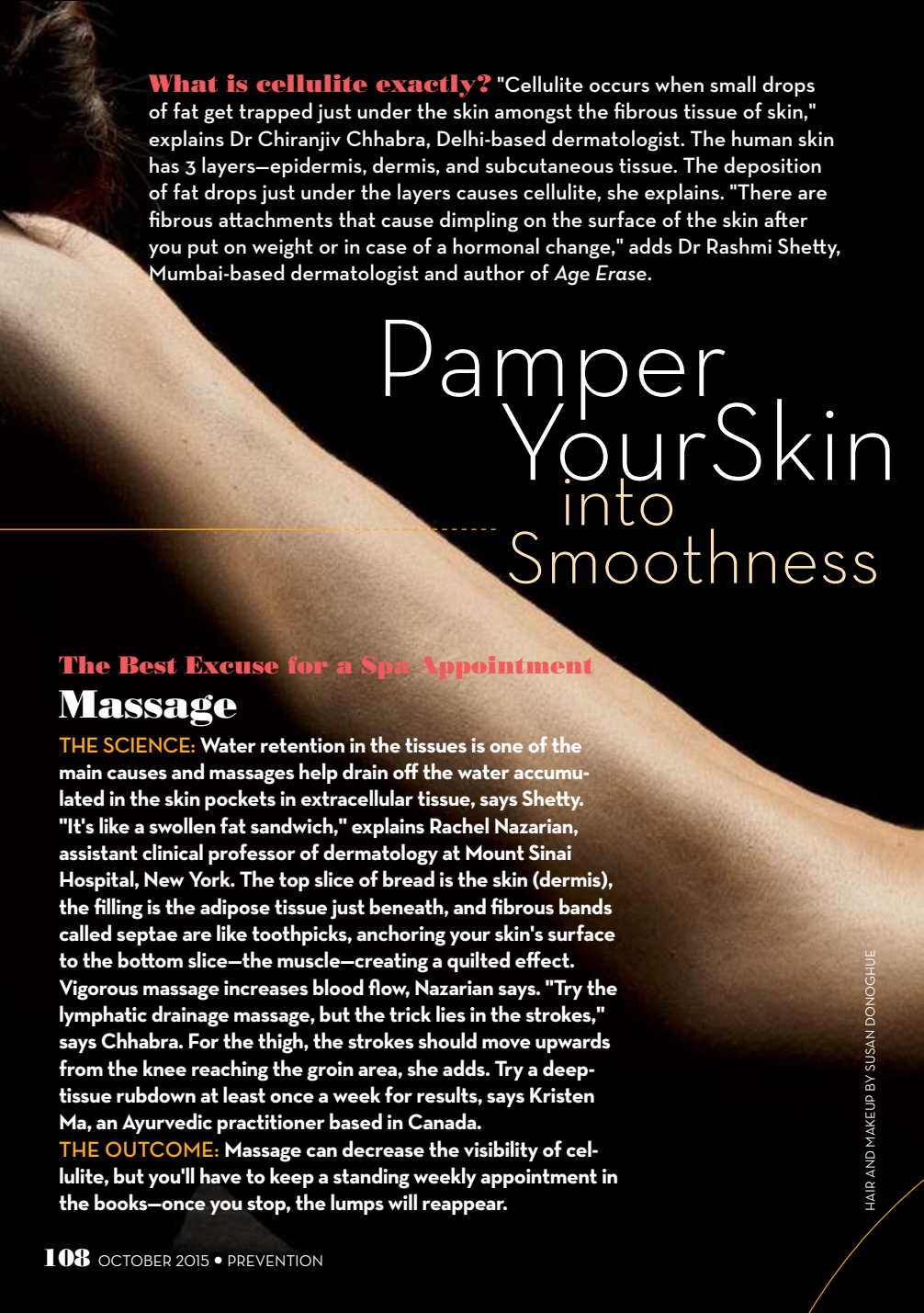
Cellulite Solutions

That Actually Work

**It's Not (Entirely) Hype That You
Can Ditch the Dimples**

BY JESSICA CHIA | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER ROSA

WE'LL SAY ONE THING FOR CELLULITE: IT DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE. Eighty to 90% of adult women are saddled with dimpled, puckered-looking skin and nothing (aside from winning the genetic lottery) can prevent it. But the old tricks—questionable creams, throwaway gadgets, and, yes, skirted swimsuits—have given way to smart new cellulite-attacking methods rooted in science, not snake oil.



What is cellulite exactly? "Cellulite occurs when small drops of fat get trapped just under the skin amongst the fibrous tissue of skin," explains Dr Chiranjiv Chhabra, Delhi-based dermatologist. The human skin has 3 layers—epidermis, dermis, and subcutaneous tissue. The deposition of fat drops just under the layers causes cellulite, she explains. "There are fibrous attachments that cause dimpling on the surface of the skin after you put on weight or in case of a hormonal change," adds Dr Rashmi Shetty, Mumbai-based dermatologist and author of *Age Erase*.

Pamper Your Skin into Smoothness

The Best Excuse for a Spa Appointment Massage

THE SCIENCE: Water retention in the tissues is one of the main causes and massages help drain off the water accumulated in the skin pockets in extracellular tissue, says Shetty. "It's like a swollen fat sandwich," explains Rachel Nazarian, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. The top slice of bread is the skin (dermis), the filling is the adipose tissue just beneath, and fibrous bands called septae are like toothpicks, anchoring your skin's surface to the bottom slice—the muscle—creating a quilted effect. Vigorous massage increases blood flow, Nazarian says. "Try the lymphatic drainage massage, but the trick lies in the strokes," says Chhabra. For the thigh, the strokes should move upwards from the knee reaching the groin area, she adds. Try a deep-tissue rubdown at least once a week for results, says Kristen Ma, an Ayurvedic practitioner based in Canada.


THE OUTCOME: Massage can decrease the visibility of cellulite, but you'll have to keep a standing weekly appointment in the books—once you stop, the lumps will reappear.

The Spontaneous Brunch-Weekend Saviour

Radio Frequency Waves

THE SCIENCE: FDA-approved devices like Smooth-Shapes, Thermage and Scarlet use radio frequency waves to tighten skin by stimulating collagen growth and heating up the fatty adipose layer beneath the skin, which increases blood circulation. "There are different types of radio frequency (RF) equipment and each is used depending on individual needs," says Shetty. (When cells don't get enough oxygenated blood, the fibrous bands tethering skin to muscle thicken and pull even more.) Finally, the devices follow up with massage, suction, or vibration, which helps move excess fluid and fat (both of which contribute to cellulite bulging) into the lymphatic system so they can eventually be peed out, Nazarian says. "This method helps break down the fat under the skin along with tightening the skin," says Shetty. "Also, unlike other procedures that just reduce fat, RF tightens the skin to give a smoother and younger appearance, she adds.

THE OUTCOME: With RF, you will see some immediate improvement and can show off the results the very next day (no bruising!). However, the transformation won't peak until you've had a month of twice-weekly sessions. What's more, you'll need a maintenance treatment every few months—forever. Go 6 months without and you'll lose most of your gains, Nazarian warns.



Cellulite affects almost
90% of women but only 10% of men.

diy for Smoother Thighs

The Jillionth Reason Not to Skip Your Workout

Strength Training

THE SCIENCE: While you can't lose cellulite by dropping kilos (sigh), lower-body strength training may help. Building muscle provides a firm foundation for overlying fat and skin, though side effects such as muscle's higher fat-burning capacity and exercise's circulation-increasing effects may help, too, says Wayne Westcott, instructor of exercise science at Quincy College, Massachusetts, USA.

THE OUTCOME: According to a study published in *Fitness Management*, 80% of women who worked their major leg muscles 3 days a week with about 30 minutes of resistance exercise reported some improvement in the appearance of cellulite after 6 months. "They looked smoother, firmer, and more toned," says Westcott. Your cellulite won't be a thing of the past, but this much we can vouch for: you will be more confident showing off your legs. Though you might not see major results for months, you can rebuild about 1 kilo of new muscle in just 10 weeks of training.

Three Moves That Target Cellulite

Perform 3 sets of 15 repetitions per move for stronger, smoother legs.



SQUAT/CALF RAISE

Squat, then stand tall, lifting heels to shift weight to balls of feet. Lower to start.


HIP BRIDGE

Lie on the ground with knees bent, raise hips so knees, hips and chest are aligned. Hold 3 seconds. Lower to start.

DUMB-BELL DEADLIFT

Holding dumb-bells, hinge at hips, keeping legs straight. Return to start.

MITCH MANDEL



The Slow and Steady Solution

A Topical Cream

THE SCIENCE: There's evidence that topicals with caffeine can help and strengthen skin so it puckers less. "For any caffeinated cream to deliver, it's important that it's deeply absorbed by the skin," says Chhabra. "The formulation of the cream is important—so one with mild formulation will not be able to lessen the dimples," she adds. Ask your dermatologist for a prescription-strength option for the biggest impact.

THE OUTCOME: Using a caffeinated cream twice a week reduces dimples, but only until you quit. Retinoids are more lasting: with regular use, they thicken the skin by a fraction of a millimeter.

The Holistic Helper Dry Brushing

THE SCIENCE: Dry brushing—working a stiff body brush in circular motions from hands and feet towards the heart—stimulates the flow of both blood and lymphatic fluid just beneath the skin's surface, says Ma. "Poor lymphatic circulation can increase the size and intensity of cellulite, which will further increase the amount of dimpling in regions like thighs," adds Chhabra. The technique also promotes collagen growth, which can make skin firmer and, ultimately, lumps less noticeable.

THE OUTCOME: The 10-minute practice will give skin a smoother appearance and reduce dullness, if you brush regularly 🍷

—With inputs by Ayushi Thapliyal



When you
host, disinvite
the catastrophiser
inside your brain.



This Is Your Last Negative Thought

That's because next time you take a flying leap into defeatist mode, your brain will be armed and ready. The latest mindfulness training helps you shut down your incorrigible lifelong friend Debbie Downer—for good.

BY KATE ROCKWOOD | ILLUSTRATIONS BY LUCI GUTIERREZ

You Anticipate Disaster Around Every Corner

You want to throw a surprise party for your friend, but in between planning you can't help but think about all that might go wrong. What if someone spills the beans? What if you invite the wrong people? What if the streamers go up in flames?

WHAT THE PROS CALL IT: Catastrophising

→ **TELLTALE SIGNS:** Your brain loves dress rehearsals for tragedy. You dismiss more realistic possibilities and fixate on the worst possible outcomes.

→ **COMBAT IT NOW:** Remind yourself that this negativity is just your brain

trying to keep you safe by

preparing for

every potential problem ahead, recommends Barbara Fredrickson, director of the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Lab at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Then say



You Assume Everything's Your Fault


You really clicked with the new member of your book club. But then you hear from a friend that she's dropping out, without giving a reason. Your first thought: *It was probably something I said. Was I not welcoming enough? Did she not actually like me?*

WHAT THE PROS CALL IT: Personalising

→ **TELLTALE SIGNS:** You tend to think you're responsible for all the negativity around you, without considering other explanations.

→ **COMBAT IT NOW:** Cultivate some perspective to cut off this misguided thinking. The next time it occurs to you to personalize someone else's behaviour, have a counter statement ready, like *This is just negative thinking. I am not responsible for everything.*

A weirder fix: walk through a doorway. "Doing that gives you a new context," Fredrickson says. According to scientists at the University of Notre Dame, the act



to yourself, *Thanks for trying to protect me, brain. But I'll take it from here.*

This is one of the rare times when talking things through with a friend might not be the answer. "If you have an exaggerated negativity bias or anxiety, a friend might not be able to talk you out of it," Fredrickson notes.

→ **BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** A mantra of resilience can keep runaway thoughts in check. When you start worrying about horrible birthday parties, rebuff the thought with a line like *Whatever happens, I can cope.* That statement of strength can help you go forth feeling determined rather than defeated.

of passing over a threshold cues the brain that you're finished with the situation at hand and ready to move on to something new.

→ **BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** Accept that "99% of the time you have nothing to do with the mood someone's in," says Rebecca Gladding, psychiatrist and co-author of *You Are Not Your Brain*. (Maybe your book club chum moved or maybe she's dealing with a sick parent or maybe a thousand other things.) If your conviction wavers, consider—duh!—checking in with the person to see what's up, or asking a friend for perspective, she says.

You Think How You Feel Is How Things Are

You sometimes relish an evening at home, but tonight, having no plans has left you feeling lonely. You curl up on the couch and think, *No one cares about me. I'm all alone.*

WHAT THE PROS CALL IT:

Emotional Reasoning

→ **TELLTALE SIGNS:** Your mind fuses together feelings and reality. When you feel lonely, you think nobody cares about you. When you feel guilty, you think you must have done something wrong.

→ **COMBAT IT NOW:** Get some distance from your feelings so you can begin to recognise them as just that: feelings. In *The Happiness Trap*, psychologist Russ Harris recommends describing the emotion ("I am lonely") as a temporary state: "I'm feeling lonely." Next, try adding more space between you and the emotion by subtly restructuring the statement as "I'm noticing that I'm feeling lonely." Take it one step further with a little zaniness. Harris suggests singing your "I am" statement ("I am lonely") to the tune of "Happy Birthday." Then try singing in a cartoon character's voice. Even if you don't crack a smile, you'll be putting more space between you



ridiculous self and that even sillier negative thought.

→**BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** Curb a tendency toward emotional reasoning through meditation. "The central skill that emerges from meditation is decentred awareness—the ability to perceive thoughts as impermanent," Fredrickson says. "So if you feel sad, that doesn't mean you are a failure. If

an angry feeling arises, you can recognise it without overly identifying with it." If the thought of meditation makes you fidgety, try this instead: spend 1 minute mentally scanning how your entire body feels. Focussing on physical sensations, like how the chair feels against your back, is a quick and subtle reminder that your thoughts and the world around you are distinct.

You Fixate on the Downside

The chicken at your recent dinner party turned out great, the conversation flowed, even your standoffish cousin seemed at ease. But your dessert was a flop—an unset cheesecake that tasted more sour than sweet. Three days after the party, you're still thinking about it and cringing.

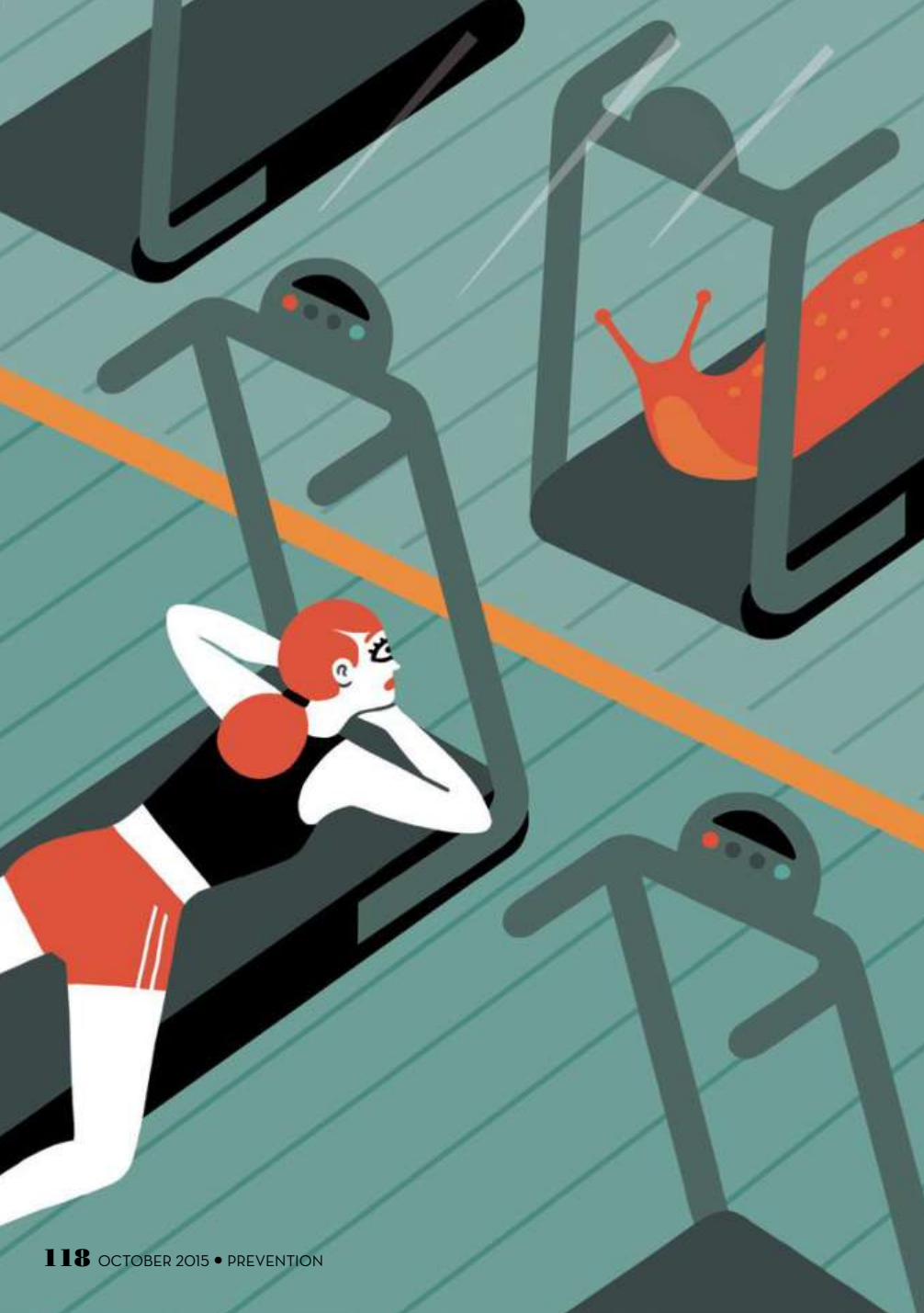
WHAT THE PROS CALL IT:

Magnifying the Negative

→**TELLTALE SIGNS:** You have an eagle eye for vexing details, and you tend to blow them up until all the positive—and all the context—falls out of view.

→**COMBAT IT NOW:** Force yourself to list 3 good things instead. (Dessert fell flat, but remember how much they loved the risotto?) If the bad thought keeps returning, think, say or even shout the word "Stop!" advises Sonja Lyubomirsky, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside. Even picturing a giant red stop sign can help.

→**BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** When this type of thinking regularly comes up about something more permanent, like your body image or your marriage, try this: write down your negative thought, crumple up the paper and throw it away. In a study at Ohio State University, people who wrote down negative things about their bodies and then tossed the notes had a more positive self-image later compared with those who kept the papers with them. "They physically discarded the thoughts, but it was as if they'd mentally discarded them as well," says Richard Petty, the study's co-author and a psychology professor at the university.



You See Patterns of Defeat

For 3 weeks you've stuck to your goal of daily treadmill walks. But then you hit a stressful patch at work and skip it for 4 days straight. You think, *I always quit exercising eventually. I'm such a slug.*

WHAT THE PROS CALL IT:

Overgeneralising

→ **TELLTALE SIGNS:** You take a bad moment and draw huge, sweeping conclusions from it.

→ **COMBAT IT NOW:** Distract yourself. When you're doing something routine—prepping dinner, say—your brain goes into autopilot. That's when you're most likely to start cataloguing all the ways you've blown it before. But if you distract yourself with an activity that demands full focus, like following a new recipe, toxic thoughts will have less room to take over.

→ **BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** "Imagine your oldest friend or someone else you want the best for, is having the same self-defeating thought," Gladding says. "What would you say to her? How would you feel about her situation?" This sort of cognitive restructuring, which Gladding has dubbed the Wise Advocate, can amplify the compassion you feel for yourself, inoculating you from being so unnecessarily hard on yourself in the long run.

You're Sure Stuff Won't Go Well


You see a job posting that makes your heart leap. Then you start calculating the odds of your résumé actually being seen. You think, *Why waste my time? I'll probably never get picked.*

WHAT THE PROS CALL IT:

Negative Forecasting

→ **TELLTALE SIGNS:** You anticipate bad outcomes no matter the signs.

→ **COMBAT IT NOW:** "A lot of our negativity comes from mental time travel," Fredrickson says. "Odds are the current moment is benign or even positive." Press your toes into the floor to bring your focus out of your mind and back to your physical surroundings, then take stock of one positive thing, however tiny.

→ **BANISH IT FOR GOOD:** Resilience is your ticket. "Resilient people tend to have a wait-and-see attitude rather than creating negativity through their expectations," Fredrickson says. You can build resilience with a steady diet of positive emotional experiences. That can be as simple as signing up for that weekly meditation class you've been curious about or writing down something you're grateful for every evening. Try it tonight—the only thing you stand to lose is a little unnecessary pessimism. 

SHRINK YOUR SUGAR BELLY



This gentle yoga and Pilates workout will help you control cravings and keep the weight off for good—all while giving your core shape, flexibility, and strength.

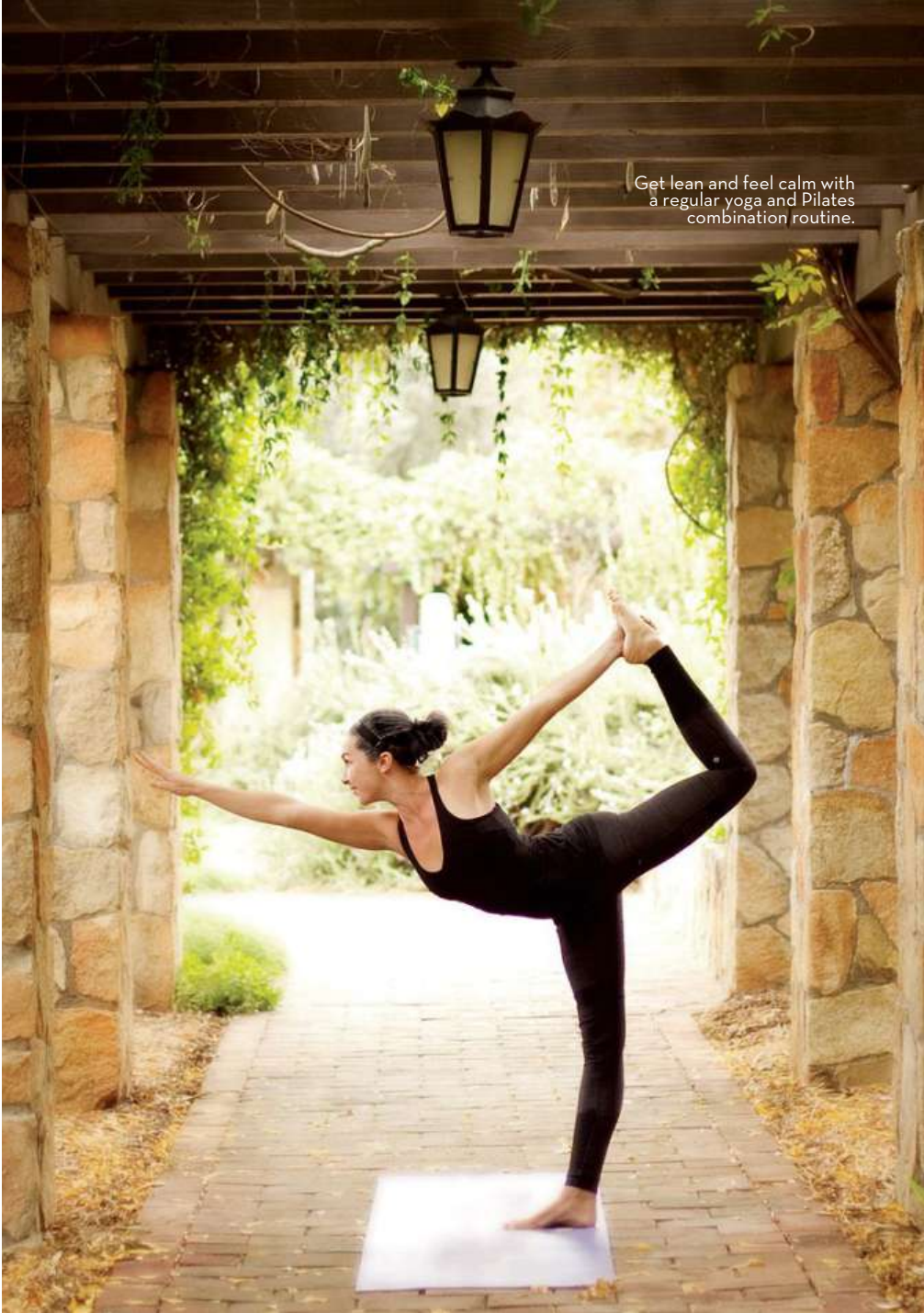
BY LARA ROSENBAUM

When you eliminate added sugars from your diet, you'll start to shed some serious weight. But by adopting a smart exercise plan, you will see even faster, better results. Exercise has been proven to help control sugar cravings and blood sugar levels. What's more: regular workouts will help you keep the weight off once you lose it. Data from the National Weight Control Registry (US), a long-running study of people who have lost at least

13 kilos and kept them off for 1 year or longer, shows that 90% of people cite exercise as one of their main strategies to maintain weight.

These slimming moves, designed by top experts in Pilates, yoga, and fusion (a combo of the two), help build muscle while both relaxing and invigorating your body. Do this workout 3 non-consecutive days a week, or if you already have an exercise plan, add one move from each goal to your regular programme twice a week.

Get lean and feel calm with
a regular yoga and Pilates
combination routine.





1 TWISTED ROOT

Yoga

Lie on back in traditional sit-up stance, with hands clasped behind head, feet on floor, and knees bent. Then cross right knee over left knee and try to interlock right ankle with left ankle. Next, inhale and curl head and chest up. Exhale and curl pelvis and thighs up, pulling abs in towards spine (shown). Release back to sit-up stance and repeat 3 times. Next, place hands on left thigh. Push hands against thigh as thigh pushes against hands. Hold for 1 breath and release, and then repeat sequence with legs switched.

2 THE CURL

Fusion

Lie on mat with knees bent and arms at sides. Roll shoulder blades off floor to form a large C from the top of your head to your knees, letting hands slide to outside of thighs (a). Tuck pelvis up and, under and gaze beyond knees. Hold for 30 seconds (b). Next, raise arms up by ears and hold for another 30 seconds. Return to start and rest for 30 seconds, then repeat for 2 more sets.

3

TEASER PREP

Pilates

Lie on back with legs squeezed together, knees bent slightly more than 90 degrees, feet flat on floor. Raise one leg towards ceiling until thighs are parallel. Extend arms overhead and reach out behind you, elongating abdominals (a). Tighten core and bring arms forward, tracing a large semicircle over your body, letting head follow. Roll up one vertebra at a time, until lower back starts to come off of floor. Hold for 3 seconds (b). Roll back down, pressing spine into mat and retracing path over head, with arms ending up fully extended behind you and both feet on floor as at the start (c). Repeat move with opposite leg raised. That's 1 rep. Perform 5 reps.



TOO HARD?
KEEP BOTH FEET
ON THE FLOOR FOR
THE ENTIRE MOVE.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(a)



(b)



a



b

1
SAW
Pilates

Sit on mat with legs extended slightly wider than hip-width apart and feet flexed. Stretch arms out to sides, fingers extended, palms facing floor. Root bottom and legs firmly into floor and inhale, pulling abs in and up (a). Next, twist to the right, slightly curling chest and head towards right leg, and exhale, bringing left hand across and just above right foot—this is the "sawing" motion (b). Return to start and repeat on other side. Alternate sides for 6 total reps.



a



b

2
CAT-COW-POINTER
SEQUENCE
Fusion

Get on all fours and start stretch by pulling abs in and rounding back upwards into Cat pose. Hold for a few seconds, then press abs down towards the floor, arching back into Cow. Repeat one more time. Next, raise left arm in front of you and extend right leg out behind you (a). Hold this position for 5 seconds, then round back and bring left elbow in towards right knee (b). Hold this position for 5 seconds, then extend and bring in for 1 more set. Repeat with the other side for 2 sets.

Core
Goal

SHAPE



1 TWISTING WARRIOR

Yoga

From a standing position, move into Warrior, stepping left leg forward, knee bent directly over ankle, with toes straight ahead, and right leg back, with toes turned out. Root feet into ground, engage core, and twist at waist, hooking right elbow over left thigh. Make a fist with right hand and brace left hand on it, lifting torso up off thigh and relaxing neck (a). Hold for a few breaths, then repeat on other side. For more of a challenge, perform a bind by sliding left arm down and around thigh, clasping hands behind back (b).



2 SPINE TWIST

Pilates

Sit tall on mat with legs extended and squeezed together, feet flexed. Extend arms straight out to sides, palms down and parallel to floor (a). Next, inhale, pulling abs in towards spine, and twist to the left, squeezing the glutes (b). Exhale and lift chest up to increase the twist. Inhale and repeat to right side, alternating sides for 6 total reps. 15

Clean and Lean

CHICKEN BURGER WITH CARAMELISED ONION

Enjoy a real lean burger for fewer calories by making patties out of chicken, which is more heart-healthy than red meat.

Recipe, p. 132



Better Burgers

Greasy, fattening patties, step away from the grill: **these 5 burgers have been reinvented to be nutrient-rich, low-calorie flavour sensations.** (Why, hello, spices! Hey, extra veggies!) Get your buns ready—this is the most surprising, delicious burger season yet.

BY KHALIL HYMORE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER TESTANI

Sugar Slasher

BARBECUED TOFU BURGER

Most barbecued sandwiches are sugar bombs, especially when meat is marinated for hours. This vegan burger skips that step by using smoked tofu, so you can cut back on sugary sauce.

Recipe, p. 132



FOOD STYLING BY KHALI HYMORE; PROD STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART



Vamped-Up Veggie

CHICKPEA-AND- WALNUT BURGER

Forego frozen processed patties for this easy, fresh option, which turns meatless into max taste by mixing beans with onions, carrots, and walnuts—all topped with a creamy honey-tahini sauce.

Recipe, p. 132

Protein Powerhouse

CHICKEN SAUSAGE BURGER

Spiced lean meat combines with an egg sunny-side up to pack this burger with protein. Parsley and peppery rocket add vitamins K and C. Make it low-carb by switching out the bun for a sturdy lettuce leaf.

Recipe, p. 133





Taste Explosion

CHICKEN BANH MI BURGER

Get more flavour and less saturated fat with this Vietnamese take on a traditional chicken sandwich. Cucumber-carrot slaw and coriander add a dose of fibre and antioxidants.

Recipe, p. 133

Chicken Burger With Caramelised Onion

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes

Serves 4

500 g ground chicken

½ tsp salt

½ tsp black pepper

2 tsp olive oil

2 slices bacon, finely chopped (optional)

1 med onion, sliced

2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

4 wholewheat buns

1 lg tomato, sliced

4 leaves lettuce

1. In a bowl, mix chicken, salt, and pepper. Cover and chill.

2. In a pan, heat oil and crisp bacon (if using). Add onion, reduce heat, and cook, until soft and golden, 20 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and stir in vinegar.

3. Lightly coat grill (or tawa) with cooking spray and prepare for medium-high heat. Form meat into 4 equal balls and flatten each to ¾" thick patty. Grill, about 10 minutes. Serve on rolls with bacon-onion mixture, tomato, and lettuce.

NUTRITION (per serving) 511 Kcal, 30 g pro, 43 g carb, 3 g fibre, 8 g sugar, 25 g fat, 9 g sat fat, 627 mg sodium

Barbecued Tofu Burger

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes

Serves 4

100 g smoked or plain tofu

1 c low-sugar barbecue sauce

2 Tbsp orange juice

4 tsp veg mayonnaise

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 tsp Dijon mustard

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp black pepper

2 c shredded cabbage

½ c shredded carrots

½ sm onion, sliced

4 wholewheat buns

½ c sliced sour pickles

1. Slice tofu in half lengthwise. Marinate with barbecue sauce.

2. Whisk orange juice, mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Add cabbage, carrots, and onion. Toss well.

3. Lightly coat grill with cooking spray and prepare for medium-high heat. Add marinated tofu and grill, 5 minutes. Serve on rolls, topped with slaw and pickles.

NUTRITION (per serving) 385 Kcal, 18 g pro, 55 g carb, 5 g fibre, 16 g sugar, 11 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 1,010 mg sodium

Chickpea-and-Walnut Burger

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes + chilling time

Serves 4

1 Tbsp ground flaxseed (or almond) meal

¼ c tahini

4 tsp lemon juice

2 tsp honey

2 c boiled chickpeas

½ c roughly-chopped walnuts

½ c shredded carrots

3 onions, roughly chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

½ c cooked brown rice

¼ c chopped coriander

1 tsp ground cumin

¾ tsp salt

¾ tsp black pepper

½ tsp cinnamon

4 wholewheat burgers

4 leaves lettuce

½ cucumber, sliced

2 radishes, sliced

1. In a bowl, combine flaxseed meal and 3 Tbsp warm water. Let stand. In another bowl, combine tahini, lemon juice, and honey. Set aside.

2. In food processor, combine chickpeas, walnuts, carrots, onions, and garlic. Puree until almost smooth. Stir in rice, coriander, cumin, salt, pepper, cinnamon, and reserved flax-water mixture. Chill at least 1 hour. Form into 4 equal patties.

3. Lightly coat non-stick pan with cooking spray and heat to medium. Cook patties until golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve on rolls topped with tahini spread, lettuce, cucumber, and radishes.

NUTRITION (per serving) 590 Kcal, 18 g pro, 81 g carb, 14 g fibre, 9 g sugar, 25 g fat, 2.5 g sat fat, 838 mg sodium

Chicken Sausage Burger

PREP TIME: 15 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 20 minutes
Serves 4

500 g ground chicken
2 Tbsp chopped parsley
1 tsp fennel seeds
¾ tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp red chilli flakes
1 clove garlic, grated
1 sm onion, grated
4 lg eggs
4 wholewheat ciabatta buns
2 c baby rocket leaves

1. Lightly coat grill with cooking spray and prepare for medium-high heat. Mix chicken, parsley, fennel, paprika, salt, black pepper, red-chilli flakes, garlic, and onion. Form into 4 patties; grill.

2. Lightly coat non-stick pan with cooking spray and heat. Add eggs and cook to desired doneness. Serve burgers on

rolls, topped with eggs and rocket.

NUTRITION (per serving) 420 Kcal, 38 g pro, 42 g carb, 3 g fibre, 1 g sugar, 11 g fat, 3 g sat fat, 911 mg sodium

Chicken Banh Mi Burger

PREP TIME: 15 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes
Serves 4

3 Tbsp mayonnaise
2 Tbsp Sriracha sauce (or chilli sauce)
500 g ground chicken
2 Tbsp chopped coriander
4 tsp fish sauce (or soya sauce)
1 clove garlic, grated
1 tsp black pepper
¼ tsp salt
2 Tbsp rice vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
2 tsp honey
1 c shredded carrots
1 c sliced cucumber
½ sm onion, sliced
½ jalapeño, sliced (optional)
1 baguette, cut into 4 pieces (4½" each) and sliced open

1. In a bowl, mix mayonnaise and 1 Tbsp Sriracha sauce; chill and keep aside.

2. Lightly coat grill (or tawa) with cooking spray and prepare for medium-high heat. Mix chicken, coriander, 1 Tbsp Sriracha sauce, 2 tsp fish sauce, and garlic, pepper, and salt. Form into 4 patties (3" x 5" each). Grill, 10 minutes; and let rest.

3. Whisk together vinegar, honey, and 2 tsp fish sauce. Add carrots, cucumber, onion, and jalapeño. Serve patties on baguette, topped with Sriracha-mayonnaise and carrot-cucumber mix.

NUTRITION (per serving) 472 Kcal, 27 g pro, 50 g carb, 1 g fibre, 6 g sugar, 17.5 g fat, 3.5 g sat fat, 979 mg sodium

Eat Clean

We don't want to suffocate Mother Earth with our food choices. It just so happens that what's bad for her isn't so great for us either.

BY AYUSHI THAPLIYAL



▶ **1 aerated drinks**
Recycling your can or bottle of pop isn't enough. G Miller and S Spoolman authors of *Sustaining the Earth*, say that it takes up to 500 litres of water to produce a 2-litre bottle of cola (including water used to grow and harvest ingredients like sugarcane)! The Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board ordered a fizzy drink company to shut down its operations in Mehdiganj after ground water levels fell some 18 feet. A study in the journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*, found that artificial sweeteners contaminate drinking water.

▶ **2 imported fruits**
Consider how much air-fuel is consumed when you ship Mexican avocados. "There's a dip in nutrients the longer the time from farm to fork," says Lovneet Batra, Delhi-based nutritionist. "There's a reason nature gives you certain produce at a particular time of the year and place," she adds.



DIY:

Use Carbonfootprint.com to calculate your household energy use.

3 packaged foods

Frozen entrées may be practical, but this convenience is at a huge expense. The plastic trays and wraps which are tossed in the trash stay in landfills for years. A report by the *Natural Resources Defence Council*, New York suggests that the polystyrene and expanded polystyrene used in packaging present health risks to marine life when they're dispersed into waterways.



4 fast foods

Along with being the cause of diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease—a fast food meal comes with elaborate wrappers, straws, and an assortment of packaged condiments. All of which end up on non-biodegradable landfills. A study, called *The Cheeseburger Footprint* pegged the total energy use that goes into the bun-patty mix at 7-20 megajoules.



5 palm oil

It's the most commonly-used edible vegetable oil found in chips, candy, and margarine, and is imported primarily from Indonesia and Malaysia. Reports suggest that an area equivalent to the size of 300 football fields of rainforest is cleared each hour for palm oil production, which puts orangutans, Sumatran tigers, and elephants close to extinction. 🌿

“
The palm oil industry is plagued with issues like deforestation, loss of habitat, soil erosion, and climate change.
”

— World Wide Fund



Feel Good Face Value



Try this conveniently-located spa for its treatments and pre-festive radiance.

BY PALLAVI SHANKAR

The D'nottable Beauty & Spa Salon is rather conveniently located in the middle of the bustling Greater Kailash 1 M-block market in Delhi, so you can step in even on a whim when you're out shopping. Their signature treatment, called the Colour Therapy Facial (₹2,800 for an hour) is more than your regular face-massage-followed-by-a-face-pack regimen. It has a detoxification philosophy at its core to rid the body of toxins, leaving you with clear skin. So you actually get a massage on specific pressure points to release them.

The pampering starts with some skin-friendly rose tea in the therapy room along with traditional spa treats like the soothing smell of aromatherapy oils and a smiling masseuse. Just before the facial begins, a black thread is tied around the second toes of both feet, apparently another toxin-flushing method. Your face is pampered with a massage, a gentle scrub and a face pack. Finally, the thread is 'de-knotted' to complete the treatment. The staff is vague about why it's called colour therapy, but let that not deter you, because you do emerge fresh, with no post-facial breakouts. 🌿





SNACK ATTACK

An assortment of nuts, dried fruits and seeds is an easy snack to throw in a gym bag pocket. Try the Gaia Sport Trail Mix which features a blend of almonds, cashew nuts, peanuts, raisins, dried papaya, dried pineapple, and melon seeds. High on fibre, protein, and good fats (and prepared without any added sugar)—pop in a handful when hunger strikes post workout. ₹160/100 g.

BANISH BLEMISH

If you're plagued with adult acne, here's a product that promises to regulate sebum production, while being gentle on the skin. The Bioderma Sébium Gel Moussant Purifying Cleansing Foaming Gel is a soap-free cleanser enriched with actives like zinc sulphate and copper sulphate.



Moreover, it's paraben-free and hypoallergenic, making it a good fit for those with sensitive skin. ₹1,299 (available in leading pharmacies, countrywide).



BREAST CHECK

You already know the importance of doing a breast self exam. So if you're wondering how you're going to be regular about it, this app can help

you get on track. The Boarding For Breast Cancer app details the right way to do a self exam, helps you set monthly reminders, and also gives nifty tips to keep breast cancer at bay. Free for iOS and Android. Now there's no excuse not to—really.

RUN LOLA RUN

Are you gearing up to run? Here, 2 launches that can help.



IN HER SHOES

The Reebok Crossfit range has a new addition: the Nano 5.0. With a Kevlar fibre upper mesh, this lightweight training shoe offers superb grip, traction, and stability. ₹9,999.

CAUSE & EFFECT

Sweating when you run is natural. But, you can do away with the icky, wet feel with a Climalite Activ tee from Adidas' Breast Cancer x Activ Range—a part of the proceeds of which are donated to the Aktiv Against Cancer foundation. ₹1,499.



p.s. I love you

Togetherness is...

It was a tough decision, opting out of a marriage, especially since I had a child, but it felt like we'd come to the end of the road together. The good thing was I reached out and began to connect with old friends. One of them was this guy I'd worked with briefly, and who I'd known in passing in college. The more we got talking, the more I liked him. He made me laugh, was non-judgemental, was nice to the waiters, and patient on the road. I admired his large-heartedness, respected him for his talent, and his way of looking at life. We started seeing each other without any promises to commit, but eventually did—after a year of living together we recently got married. I feel truly blessed to have him by my side, through the ups and downs of daily life. This is how easy it should be, to have a friend as your companion! —**Ritika Jain, Gurgaon**



Write in to us with a short story or a tribute to someone you love preventionidia@intoday.com.

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EARN MORE, WORK LESS

FOODS THAT BOOST ENERGY

GET DRUNK TO DETOX, P43

PLUS! VIDEO GAMES THAT CAN DOUBLE YOUR SEX DRIVE P60!

FOR YOU

THE MEN'S HEALTHY GALAPAGOS

FOUR MH GUYS LOST THE FLAB AND WON! YOU CAN TOO!

Men's Health



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